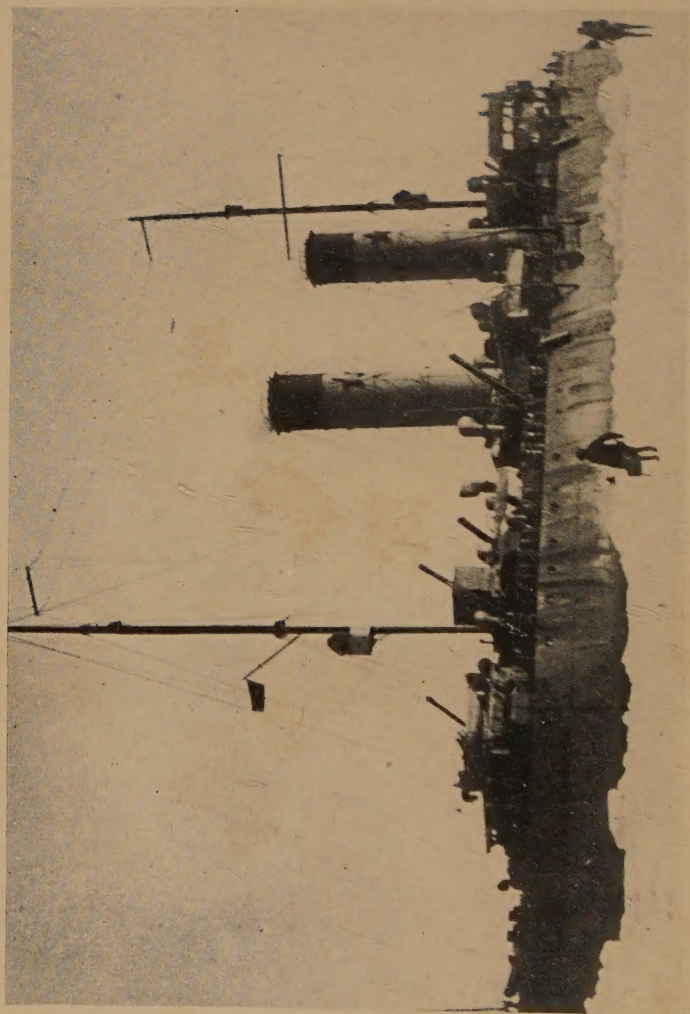


the krassin



The *Krassin* fast in the ice pack.

the krassin

by
Maurice Parijanine

translated by
Lawrence Brown

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FOREWORD

THE true hero of this book is a warship of the Soviet navy. I boarded her first when she came back from Spitzbergen, famous throughout the world.

Her name, the *Krassin*, had been made famous, not by the machinery of publicity and press agents, but by the sheer weight of the worth of her exploits. Nor was her name just on the tongue of the crowds which catch at the headlines. She was known and respected by men of character and discernment.

While, perhaps, the world is not entirely made up of men of this caliber, still there are enough. They can weigh and appreciate the character and importance of the actions of men. Some can even do this when glory and honor are being stolen by men who have earned none.

Even a press frankly hostile to all that goes on

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under the red flag of Soviet Russia was forced to record the heroism of the *Krassin*. But to record the bravery of men you malign is neither a consistent nor an intelligent policy. As soon as the lid could be clamped down without attracting too much attention or stirring up a scandal over journalistic ethics, universal silence reigned over the exploits of the *Krassin*.

At Paris a film was begun showing the rescue craft of the world pushing to the help of the wrecked *Italia*. The Soviet ice-breaker strangely was not among them.

This book is really addressed to the world of the workers. I would have dedicated it expressly to them if I had not judged such a thing out of keeping with what is, after all, only the work of an investigator and a witness. This is not literature nor a novel. It is the work of a newspaper reporter, as accurate and scrupulous as such work humanly runs. At least I think so.

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INTRODUCTION

ARCTIC exploration needs no introduction, but perhaps the use of airplanes and dirigibles in this field does. For centuries exploration by sea and on foot has pushed back the rim of the unknown encircling the top of the globe, but every discovery by these means was made at a ghastly cost of effort and life.

Air exploration of the arctic offered the opportunity to survey thousands of miles of unknown land and water, where men on foot could not have made even a hundred miles in the same length of time over the fearful roughness of the ice pack, rougher, probably, than any extended land surface on the globe.

Dogs and sledges were the old methods. Of these Amundsen wrote, "Their place now, though forever glorious, is in the museum and the history books. Aircraft has supplanted the dog."

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Probably very few now remember Andrée, the first of the air explorers of the north who set out for the pole in a balloon in 1897. His work opened up a new method, but he himself was never heard from.

But if Andrée is not remembered, his successors in recent years are: Byrd's flight over the magnetic pole in 1926; Captain Wilkins' flight in April, 1928, from Alaska to Spitzbergen; the Amundsen-Nobile flight across the pole in the dirigible *Norge* in 1926.

Indirectly, perhaps, the flight of the *Norge* was the cause of the *Italia* expedition. The earlier trip had not been all Italian despite the fact that the dirigible had been built in Italy and that General Umberto Nobile was an officer in the Italian Army. But the Italians were not arctic explorers, so the expedition included Captain Roald Amundsen, discoverer of the South Pole in 1911, and one of the greatest living explorers.

Hardly had the *Norge* made her landing in Alaska, when acrimonious disputes broke out concerning the proper share of credit. The details

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of this dispute are not relevant here, but the dispute itself apparently determined the Italian Government to have a flight all its own where there could be no question of divided credit.

So in February, 1928, General Nobile unfolded from Italy detailed plans for his proposed flight in the coming summer. His dirigible was to be the *Italia*, then under construction in Rome, a ship built along the same lines as the *Norge* and only slightly larger. Nobile scoffed at the arguments of some arctic experts that despite the successful dash of the *Norge* there was still grave doubt that so small a ship could withstand the weight of the ice coating which was almost certain to form on a dirigible in the arctic.

The expedition had the approval of the Italian Government and was financed by the Italian Royal Geographic Society and the city of Milan. The expedition, General Nobile announced, was to be strictly scientific and would embrace three distinct divisions of work.

A hangar was to be set up at Ny Aalesund, Svalbard, on the shore of Kings Bay, Spitz-

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bergen, the coal mining village on that arctic island colony of Norway. From here the *Italia* was to make her flights.

The three divisions of the work were to be: first, the charting of the lands north of Russia; second, a flight to the pole where the ship was to moor for three weeks and land a crew of six men to make observations; and third, to make several flights westward to study the region between Baffin Land, Prince Albert Land and the pole, the region known to arctic explorers as the Canadian Archipelago. There was to be general work which would be carried on during all the trips, principally observation of the arctic weather and a particular study of the heat in the sunlight at or near the pole.

On March 10 the *Italia* made her first test flight and Nobile announced that he would drop at the pole an Italian flag and a six-foot oaken cross. The cross was engraved with a Latin inscription, blessed by the Pope, and presented to the expedition.

On April 11 at the Baggio airdrome at Milan



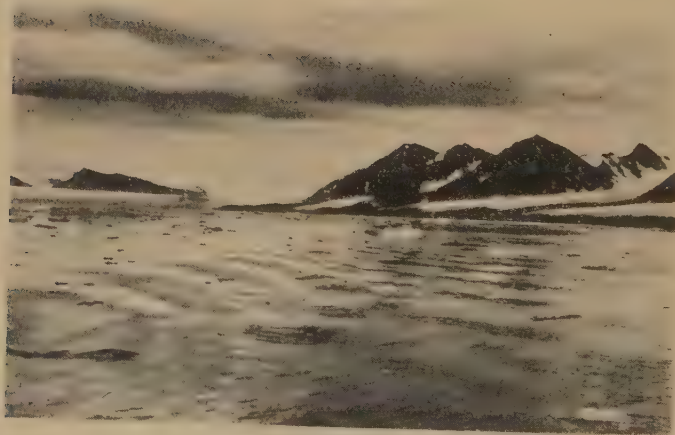
The *Italia* sailing from Milan.



The Landing at Stolp.



Leaving Ny Aalesund for the Pole.



Kings Bay.

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the *Italia* was solemnly blessed by Cardinal Tosi, Archbishop of Milan, assisted by Monseignor Panizzardi, military chaplain, and Bishop Cossio of Loreto. At the head of the procession of benediction was carried the oaken cross to be dropped at the pole.

General Nobile's life was then insured for \$34,000, those of members of the expedition at figures varying from \$4,200 to \$10,500, and on April 15 the *Italia* sailed from Milan for Stolp, Pomerania, Germany, the first leg of her flight.

"We are taking off on the first flight with the airship for an expedition of research and scientific study," Nobile declared just before sailing. "We are going with the good wishes of the State and the benediction of the Church. Our success is sure and will prove of benefit to the whole of mankind."

The flight to Stolp was difficult. High winds were encountered crossing the Carpathian Mountains and over Czecho-Slovakia the dirigible ran into heavy snow squalls and was lost for several hours. The propellers were damaged by hail and

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had to be changed as soon as the landing was made at Stolp. Here Nobile pointed out that the ease with which the *Italia* had ridden out the storms on her first leg was a warranty of her air worthiness for the arctic.

Her repairs finished, the *Italia* set out from Stolp on May 3 for Spitzbergen. Over the Gulf of Bothnia between Finland and Sweden she lost her way again, and made an unexpected landing at Vadsoe in northern Norway, twenty-nine hours out of Stolp.

In the meantime a German steamer purchased in March had been rechristened the *City of Milan*, equipped to be an ice-breaker, and sent north with the hangar to Kings Bay. She was delayed somewhat, and one in Spitzbergen communications were cut off by the drowning of the Norwegian wireless operator there and not reëstablished until May 3 with the arrival of a new man from Norway. On May 5 everything at Spitzbergen was again in order. The *Italia* set out from Vadsoe, and made a safe landing at Ny Aalesund, fifteen and a half hours out.

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For ten days the *Italia* lay in her hangar undergoing a few last touches. During these days Captain Wilkins was in Spitzbergen newly arrived from his phenomenal flight across the arctic from Alaska. Nobile invited him to join the *Italia* expedition, but the Australian explorer declined on the ground that he was too busy writing a book.

On May 15 the *Italia* made her first polar flight, heading eastward to longitude 100° East, latitude 80° North; finding, Nobile reported, nothing but ice-free seas and no land whatever, despite the reputed existence of Lenin Land (formerly Nicholas II Land) exactly in this region. Amundsen, when asked about this by reporters, replied curtly that he had ridden over Lenin Land in a sled and had left two men on it to make surveys, so he imagined that it still existed. Open water seen by Nobile, he added, was conclusive proof of large land masses in the vicinity, since in such latitudes the sea is covered with ice unless there is land nearby to block the drift of the ice fields.

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The *Italia* returned safely to Kings Bay, although she had gathered a sheathing of ice on her voyage and navigated badly at times. But one such trip proved enough for the six men who had been brought along to be landed at the pole. They left in a body and took passage south aboard the Norwegian sealer *Hobby*.

The *Italia* expedition then consisted of sixteen men, two of them not Italians, Dr. Finn Malmgren of Sweden and Professor Behounek, a Czech. The Italians were General Umberto Nobile, Captains Alfred Mariano and Filippi Zappi, Professor Aldo Pontremoli, Dr. Ugo Lago, Lieutenant Ettore Arduno, Lieutenant Alfredo Viglieri, Filippo Troiano, chief engineer, Giuseppe Biaggi, wireless operator, and Natale Ceccioni, Attilio Caratti, Calisto Ciocca, Renato Alessandrini and Vincenzo Pomella, mechanics, envelope men and electricians.

On May 23, having completed mapping the northern coast of Russia and Siberia on her one trip, the *Italia* started the second part of her work: the flight to the pole. She flew northwest-

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ward until she reached the twenty-fourth meridian west, roughly the longitude of the east coast of Greenland, and then turned north. On May 24 she reached the pole, circled around for an hour or two, dropped the Italian flag and the oaken cross with the Pope's blessing and the Latin inscription, and turned south, keeping a course to the eastward of that upon which she had come. At 10 P. M. Greenwich Mean Time on May 24 she wirelessly her base ship the *City of Milan* at Kings Bay that she was facing headwinds and would be at the hangar an hour or more later than she had planned.

But the flight to the pole had been a great success. From the pole the *Italia* had sent three wireless messages, one to the Pope, one to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy and a third to Mussolini. On the morning of the twenty-fifth the papers of Rome were full of the glorious news.

The account in *La Tribuna* closed: "Let us thank God, God who manifestly wishes Italy's glory to be also His own—the banner and the cross."

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But the hours at the Ny Aalesund hangar on the shores of Kings Bay dragged by with no sign of the gray dirigible over the snow. The hour's delay announced by the *Italia* passed. More hours passed and still no news. As the time dragged into days, it finally became certain all over the world that despite the good wishes of the State and the benediction of the Church certainty of success had not been guaranteed for the *Italia*.

Speculations as to where the *Italia* had landed were rife. They located her over an arc of a quarter of the earth from the Franz Josef Archipelago to the northern coast of Greenland. Experts explained in the papers how Nobile could have landed his men safely on the ice and how they would be well provided for. Other experts explained in the papers how Nobile could have smashed to pieces, his dirigible blowing over the rugged ice, his men injured and without supplies. But still no word came from Nobile himself, although the wireless stations of the world listened patiently for him. His last message had not given his position nor mentioned anything

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about his ship except that he was facing a headwind, so conjecture was free to place him anywhere in the arctic and in any condition.

Four days without word from the dirigible decided the commander in charge of the base at Kings Bay to start searching, and the *City of Milan* got under way. Unfortunately it was then discovered that, although altered with the object of making her an ice-breaker, she was still not able to break ice, and after a day or two of futile skirting along the edge of the pack, she put back into Kings Bay.

By this time it was universally agreed that Nobile was in trouble and a number of rescue attempts were launched, although practically without coördination among them. An expedition of two ships, the sealer *Hobby* and the *Braganza*, both Norwegian, was organized by combined efforts of Norwegians and Italians. Two Norwegian airmen were attached, Captain Riiser-Larsen and Lieutenant Leutzow Holm.

Sweden likewise organized an expedition with two ships, the *Quest* and the *Tanja*, and placed

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aboard them several planes and three aviators, Lieutenants Lundborg and Schiberd, and Captain Tornberg.

The Italians sent north Major Umberto Madalena and a big Savoia plane to work from the *City of Milan*.

The French put at the disposal of Roald Amundsen the seaplane *Latham* with a French crew under Commander René Guilbaud.

Not all these rescuers arrived at once nor worked at the same time. After the *City of Milan's* vain attempt to break the ice pack, the *Hobby* explored the vicinity of Amsterdam Island on the northwest coast of Spitzbergen and returned on June 6, knowing no more than when she started. At first it was reported that she had saved three men, but this was false.

By June 9, however, Nobile's signals had finally been picked up, and it was learned that his dirigible had crashed on the ice off the northeastern corner of Northeast Land, a large island adjoining Spitzbergen on the east. Seven of his men had been carried away with the wreck of the



The Coast of Spitzbergen.



Getting down a rescue plane.



Dogs to the rescue from the *Braganza*.



Major Maddalena off in search of Nobile.

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dirigible bag and he knew nothing more of them. Three men, Malmgren, Zappi and Mariano, had set out on May 30 planning to reach North Cape on Northeast Land where they hoped to find fishing craft.

Rescue work then began in earnest. Substantially all the attempts were made by air except for one party which set out from the *Braganza* using dogs. The ice was found to be impossibly rough, however, and this attempt was given up and not repeated.

By June 16 aerial rescue work had started on a major scale.

After some days of cruising over the fields, Holm and Riiser-Larsen passed over the party without knowing it. Nobile later wirelessly to the *City of Milan* that he had seen the aviator's plane, the *Gull*, only about a mile away, but Holm explained that the blinding reflection from the ice made it almost impossible to see anything on it.

On June 20 they were at last sighted by Major Maddalena in the *Savoia 55*. He did not risk

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landing, however, and had brought no supplies to drop. Within the next two days, he returned and, though not daring to land, he dropped supplies by parachute.

In the meantime, on June 18, Amundsen in the *Latham* with Lieutenants Dietrichsen and Valette, Commander Guilbaud and Brazy, mechanician, had sailed from Tromsø in the French naval plane *Latham* bound for the ice fields. By June 20, with no word from them, serious concern began to be felt, and rescue work was begun for the rescuers. Later, ships and planes went out in search of the great Norwegian explorer and fantastic reports appeared over and over that he had been picked up here or there, that he had landed on some island or was safe aboard a fishing schooner. But on September 1, in the waters about the Lofoten Islands off the coast of Norway, some fishermen came upon the float of one of the wings, the only trace ever found of the *Latham* or of her crew.

On June 24 Lieutenant Lundborg from the Swedish relief expedition made the risky landing

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on the ice near Nobile's party and came back to Spitzbergen with General Nobile and his pet dog. Nobile, who was reported one day as seriously injured and the next as hardly scratched at all, was quoted as saying that Lundborg had insisted on taking him back first because he alone could give the extra information needed at Kings Bay to save the rest of his men. Later he was quoted as saying that his men, not Lundborg, had forced him to be saved first.

The day after rescuing Nobile Lundborg flew back to save Ceccioni, who had broken his leg in the fall of the *Italia*. But this time all Lundborg's skill was no match for the rough ice; he crashed his plane, wrecking it beyond repair, and found himself stranded on the pack with the men he had come to rescue.

Nearly two weeks of flying by various pilots and vain attempts by the ships to push their way through the ice followed without result. The *Braganza* froze immovably in the ice fields, the *Hobby* was unable even to enter the pack, the ice upon which Nobile's men and Lieutenant Lund-

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borg were stranded, drifted slowly, and gradually broke apart. A field which once had been dangerous enough for a plane to land on with its cracks and great upturned blocks, became a sea of jagged ice cakes separated from one another by ever widening bands of water.

In a last desperate effort to save his countryman, Lieutenant Schiberd risked a landing on the unstable floes and on July 6 carried back Lundborg. For three more days the Swedes tried to find a possibility of making another landing near the Italians, but on July 9 announced that, though they would continue trying, they were convinced that no plane could again land on the disintegrating floes.

In the meantime there had been no word whatever from the three men, Malmgren, Mariano and Zappi, who had set out from the main party May 30, more than five weeks before. By the early part of July they had been fairly given up for lost, and after the Swedish relief expedition made its pessimistic announcement, the fear began to creep upon the world that only Nobile out of all his company would be saved, and that the



Guilbaud and Amundsen at Tromsøe.



Nobile rescued by Lundborg.



Nobile (right) aboard the *City of Milan*.

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others would be lost as the men who blew away in the bag of the dirigible were lost, or as Mariano, Zappi and Malmgren were believed to be lost, only lost more horribly, doomed to die under the eyes of aviators unable to land on the ice and save them, and increasingly prevented from dropping supplies to them as the channels of water widened between the cakes and the parachutes of food more and more fell into the sea and were lost.

During the month of June and the early weeks of July at the bottom of long columns of dispatches on the attempted rescue of the Italians, there appeared occasionally a stick, or perhaps two, under a Russian date line mentioning that two Russian ice-breakers, the *Krassin* and the *Malyguine*, were nearing the scene of operations. The day after the Swedes declared that rescue by plane was hopeless and the fate of the Italians seemed decided, the *Krassin* burst into the headlines. The true record of these events is the story of this book.

LAWRENCE BROWN

THE *KRASSIN*

I

THE THREAD

I WAS taken aboard the *Krassin* in Stavanger Harbor by that great woman of the Revolution, Alexandra Kollontai, minister of the U.S.S.R. to Norway. I was received with more warmth than I had ever experienced as a journalist. I lived aboard the *Krassin*, met her captain, engineer, her deck hands and oilers—from everyone the same cordiality.

Now cordiality is delightful, but after all I was a journalist. Telegraphing gripping stories to Paris was supposed to be my business. The *Krassin* had come back from a dangerous expedition into the ice pack. She had saved stranded and dying men. I couldn't send back stories about

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nothing but cordiality. I burdened the wires to Paris with the best I could do.

"The twin yellow stacks of the *Krassin*, half a mile across the main channel from the water front, have become for the past ten days part of the landscape of Stavanger. Sometimes the rain flecks the smooth surface of the harbor. Sometimes a puff of wind shakes loose from the peak halyards the red flag of the proletariat.

"Stavanger is not the Norway of cliffs and glaciers. Nothing here is like that coast of headlands and dark forests, now harsh with bright colors, now buried under dense fog. Here Norway is flat, at peace with the ocean.

"The ways and the shipyards lie at the end of a long rocky island. Ramshackle fishermen's cabins cluster the shore. Here and there a few weatherbeaten summer homes stand alone in the scant, sickly vegetation. But at the far end is all the modern world of industrialism, cranes and rails and engines: the whole machinery of a great shipyard. In the middle towers the steel hull of the *Krassin*, high and dry in her cradle."

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Professor Samoilovitch received me in his little cabin under the bridge. It had the disorder of a busy man's workshop: maps, navigating instruments, a pair of mounted ducks shot in Spitzbergen, a barometer, more maps, worn, folded and covered with mathematical calculations, English and Swedish publications on conditions in the northern seas, reports of relief expeditions, telegrams in yellow batches, a huge red handbill covered with Soviet propaganda, and, in one corner behind a half drawn curtain, a bed not often slept in, and apparently less often made.

"You have come from Paris to see me!" Samoilovitch exclaimed in astonishment when I introduced myself. "From Paris! Well, send our thanks to the workers of Paris. Tell them we feel really that it's an honor to be of some use in a cause which is the same to us all. Interest such as theirs is a precious encouragement. Now feel yourself perfectly at home aboard the *Krassin*, won't you?"

To be perfectly at home I sat down in one

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of his great leather armchairs and steered the conversation into the field I wanted. How about these incredible stories men were whispering about Malmgren? What were the facts of the rescue? What had Nobile done? Silence. To the questions I had come all the way from Paris to ask he would give no answer. But I did begin to learn the reason for the great cordiality and the greater silence.

There had been an express and rigid order from Moscow. No information whatever, except of such trivial character that all the correspondents knew it already, was to be given out. Every foot of film, every photograph of the rescue work, every document, had gone to Russia before I boarded the *Krassin*. The details of an event distasteful to the Fascist government of Italy were guarded, and kept guarded by the Soviet Government of Russia. Faced with the determined foreign policy of a great nation, a newspaper correspondent has few resources. Every avenue of information, direct or indirect, was closed to me, either through the official rep-

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representative of the Soviet Government or through the men of the expedition. Only one way was left: to make what I could out of what I was told, or better, of what I wasn't told. There are some questions to which silence is a terrible "yes."

Anyway, from my first questions to Samoilovitch I saw the thread to follow. Fortunately I spoke Russian as I spoke French, and I knew enough slang to fit comfortably into any company aboard the *Krassin*, for Russian has no dialects. With the rudiments of the language and a little slang you will get along with the men of any trade.

The word had got around that a French comrade was aboard and as I wandered into the crew's quarters I was greeted as an old friend.

"Come in. Sit down. Wipe off a seat for the comrade. Here we've been two months without news of the world. What's going on?" Two men, bare chested and covered with the tattooing of anchors, ships and jumbled emblems of the Revolution, tumbled out of their bunks and went on

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deck for their watch. In the bunks nothing but bare mattresses.

"Don't mind that. The sheets are in the wash. To-night it'll be all fixed up. Now tell us. How about Marty? Still in prison? And Doriot? How about Cachin?"

I told them the news, the great strikes at Rouen and Havre. "Now listen, comrades, tell me about Malmgren." Not a word from one of them.

"Tell us about conditions in France. How are wages? What chance for a revolution? Are you doing anything to wake the masses?"

"How about the moving pictures? Have you seen any of our films? Potemkin, there was a fine piece of work!"

Here were seamen, every man of them, men who had sailed every ocean, the revolutionists of Kronstadt who had manned the machine guns and the artillery of 1917 and 1918. Now they were workers in this floating factory serving under a discipline they themselves had set.

"You'll be back, comrade?" A stoker slid up to me. "You're coming back, aren't you? Here,

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have a smoke. No, never mind, comrade, take the whole package with you. But come back."

I smoked the stoker's tobacco and I came back. I had found the thread already. Now I had found how to unravel it.

II

S O S

S O S! What a wrench of horror strikes through a man when his instrument picks from the air this cry of the fear of death reaching out of a raging ocean or the limitless stretch of the arctic ice.

A Russian peasant, Schmidt, an amateur wireless operator of the village of Voznesenskoie in the government of Viatka, first heard Nobile's distress signals on the evening of June 2. Between the broadcasting of two concerts he picked up the faint signals and made out, so he thought, the letters, F. O. Y. N.

Schmidt's local Soviet telegraphed the Moscow papers and world-wide debate sprang up. Until then the Italian theory that the dirigible had drifted off to the west against the northern coast of Greenland had been generally accepted.

S O S

Schmidt's report made no impression in Rome. Could a wireless amateur, and at that a Bolshevik peasant, get a message unheard by the great stations of the world with their powerful coils and lofty antennæ? The boy was making the story up to gain a little notoriety.

Schmidt himself was in an agony of youthful conscience. Was he sure he had got all the letters right? The letters F. O. Y. N. meant nothing to him. Perhaps he had been careless. Perhaps he was too young to be an expert wireless operator. He ransacked such maps of the arctic as he could find in the village school but found nothing that made any sense of F. O. Y. N. As a guess he offered that he might have misread the letters slightly and that they stood for an abbreviation of Franz Josef Land, a string of islands some 300 miles east-northeast of Spitzbergen. He was wrong, but nearer the track than the Italians with their revelation from heaven that Nobile was on the coast of Greenland.

Samoilovitch, director of the Institute of Arctic Studies, and a number of other Russian scien-

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tists and explorers immediately set to work. As a matter of fact an island of Foyñ does exist. It lies a hundred or so miles northeast of Spitzbergen. Careful check of the weather conditions in the arctic at the end of May convinced these men that Schmidt's message was correct and indicated the position of Nobile and his men.

On June 5 the Soviet Government decided to undertake the rescue of the Fascist general. The work was intrusted to the Aviakhim Company, a coöperative organization designed to further the development of the chemical industries and aviation in the U.S.S.R.

The *Malyguine*, an ice-breaker stationed at Archangel on the White Sea, was at once placed under control of the company by a government order. Although the *Malyguine* was not the most powerful ice-breaker in the Soviet Navy, she was chosen because her position at an arctic port enabled her to reach the ice fields sooner than any other craft. An aviator, Babouchkine, was attached to the expedition. A plane was stowed aboard, and on the night of June 12 the *Maly-*

S O S

guine sailed from Archangel. She was a much smaller craft and not so powerfully engined as the *Krassin*.

The despatch of the Tass Agency, the official Russian news association, covers the expedition of the *Malyguine*.

“Moscow, August 7, 1928.

“Babouchkine, who arrived in Moscow yesterday after vain flights from over the ice fields from the *Malyguine* in search of Nobile, gave out the following story of his flight:

“I made the first flight as soon as the *Malyguine* found herself unable to make further progress to the north through the thick ice fields. We reckoned our position then as about 200 miles from where we supposed Nobile to be. I decided that this was too great a flight to make direct, there and back, and planned to install a base about midway on the shore of Kung Karl Island.

“We succeeded in landing near this island and stored fifty gallons of gasoline in five tins well up on the beach. Hardly had we taken off for

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our flight back to the ship, when the weather changed into a drizzling storm which blanketed the *Malyguine* completely and even hid the rocky shore of Hope Island, near which our ship lay and which I had hoped to use as a beacon mark in case of thick weather. So I swung the ship around and we landed for the night on the ice near our cache on Kung Karl Island. The three of us, my mechanician, the camera man and myself, curled up in the cabin to pass the night as well as we could. Then we discovered that one of us would have to mount guard; for the polar bears, filled with curiosity by our strange plane, nosed around and even tried to investigate the cabin. The heavy drizzling fog held for twenty-eight hours. We slept as well as we could in the cabin until our radio set stopped working and then, feeling a little nervous, we photographed the cache from as many angles as we could, just to keep ourselves busy. Finally the weather cleared and we regained the *Malyguine*.

“Aboard ship again I changed the motor in my plane and determined now to fly on to Foyn

S O S

Island. Unfortunately thick weather shut down and for days showed no sign of lifting.

"This delay became too exasperating and on June 29 I took off, determined to reach Foyt Island, fog or no fog. As an extra precaution because of the weather, I took along Fomilykh, a wireless operator. This precaution was worthless, however, for hardly an hour out from the ship the radio set went completely dead.

"I flew as close to the ice as I dared without running too great a risk of crashing on an upturned block, in the hope of seeing my way through the fog. I tried to keep cheerful by remembering that Visé, the skipper, had promised to force the *Malyguine* on through the ice as near Kung Karl Island as he could get.

"In this way I made about seventy-five miles to the north before the fog became impossible and I was forced to land on a flat cake. The weather grew steadily worse; the ice cake seemed exceedingly insecure, and fearing a storm, I took off again, although the fog was much too thick for flying.

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"I cruised around for an hour or more pretty much lost, and finally had the luck to strike a good ice field about twenty miles to the leeward of Hope Island. Here we had another stroke of luck, for the storm had so delayed us that our food supplies were finished. A huge bear, drawn like his fellows on our first flight by curiosity about our ship, approached near enough for us to kill him. We cut off the haunches and quickly slid the rest of the carcass under the ice fearing the smell might draw other bears.

"On our fourth day out the weather cleared a bit in the afternoon and we took off again. The visibility was still wretched, however. I had only the faintest notion of where we were, and as night fell and our gasoline was nearly exhausted, I came down the best I could in the dark and spent another night on an ice cake.

"The next morning I discovered that we had landed on an incredibly small piece of ice, eaten at the edges, and worst of all, seamed with huge fractures all across it. I don't yet understand how I could have come down on the cake without

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sliding off into the open water all about it. As it was, we found that the cake could stand no weight except very near the center. When Fomilykh climbed out of the plane to set up an aerial, the cake tilted and slid the poor man into the freezing sea. We pulled him out with some difficulty, but we had no dry clothes for him and he had to sit for hours in the freezing cabin dripping wet. After an hour or so he turned to me, 'If we can't find the *Malyguine* to-day I'm going to die right here to-night.'

"Somehow we managed to get our plane off the shattered cake during the afternoon and before sundown picked up the *Malyguine* and got safely aboard her."

At the end of his story Babouchkine offered his opinion on Amundsen's fate.

"I think," he said, "that Amundsen is dead. I don't believe he could have flown far enough to reach the ice fields, even if he could have made a landing on them. I think the *Latham's* engine went dead while they were over open water. Perhaps he came down all right, but there was a

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storm blowing, and his plane must have been knocked to bits."

It seemed later that Babouchkine's estimate was only too true.

Babouchkine had been more than four days cut off in the ice fields. In the meantime the *Malyguine* had been having troubles of her own weathering the pack ice near Hope Island, where a decree of the British Admiralty forbids vessels to approach within ten miles of the coast. It became apparent that the rescue expedition undertaken by the Soviet Government was not going to be easy.

Even before the failure of the *Malyguine* had justified their view, informed circles in Russia pointed out that the rescue work required the best ice-breaker in the Soviet Navy, the *Krassin*, stationed in the Baltic. Professor Samoilovitch and his colleague Stromberg insisted on having her placed at their disposal. The rescue committee of the Aviakhim Company joined them. From June 5 to June 9 telegraphic negotiations went on between Leningrad and Moscow. The

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Soviet Government agreed to the use of the *Krassin* and offered to aid in financing the expedition.

In the end the total expenses (I am sorry not to be allowed to give the exact figures; they were enormous) were divided evenly between the Aviakhim Company, the Soviet Government, and the city of Leningrad. Some of the unexpected costs incurred later were taken over by others. The Italian Government paid for the repairs to the *Krassin* at Stavanger and a German company undertook to sustain the cost of the rescue of the *Monte Cervantes*.

On June 10 it was announced that the *Krassin* would sail as soon as she was equipped. Summer in the Baltic calls for no ice-breakers. The *Krassin* had been laid up, part of her gear was stowed away, some aboard, some ashore, and much had been detached for other work. Instead of a full complement she had only a skeleton crew of twenty-five aboard.

The Institute of Arctic Studies took charge. Equipment was reassembled or new stuff ob-

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tained. Supplies were purchased and stowed aboard. A new crew was built up. The 11th and 12th were days of feverish work. On the 12th the command of the expedition was organized: Samoilovitch in charge; Oras, agent for the Soviet Government; Tchoukhnovsky in charge of aviation. On the 13th the definite plans were drawn up. The *Krassin* was to pass to the west and north of Spitzbergen while the *Malyguine* worked along the edge of the ice to the east toward Franz Josef Land. The skeleton crew of the *Krassin* were given an hour's liberty ashore to say good-bye to their families and get their clothes.

"That mad afternoon!" Chpanov, a correspondent of one of the Moscow papers, described it. "I went through the department stores of Leningrad trying to buy sweaters, woolen stockings, fur overcoats. The sales girls laughed at me. Outside it was the loveliest warm spring day and they were selling bathing suits and white flannels. Once aboard ship I don't think any of us slept at all. It was run here, telegraph there, get so and

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so to bring something aboard. We had everything to see to, arms, navigating instruments, furs, food. My, how the barrels of butter swung over the side that night! And through it all we must have put twenty thousand words on the wires to Moscow.

"The next day Karpinsky from the Academy of Sciences came aboard to say good-bye to Samoilovitch. With him were men from the Avikhim Company, the Italian vice-consul and some officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs. Some one brought white chrysanthemums for us to take to Nobile.

"That night, the 15th, we had about finished loading and we got a bit of rest now and then. Samoilovitch went to sleep on a little couch, one foot hanging off on the floor. Tchoukhnovsky, our aviator, had fallen asleep in his chair across the table from me. His face lay on the boards and his arms stretched out over the table. Everyone was all in. We'd worked for days, Samoilovitch more than anyone, and we hadn't had a wink of sleep.

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"The next morning we got through with the last few things. Nobody then had the faintest idea what he was supposed to do. The cook came up almost in tears because she had forgotten to get crullers and sugar. So for breakfast we drank tea without sugar and didn't bother about crullers. But Samoilovitch had planned everything in his head. During the day things began to work smoothly, and we found he had even taken care of the crullers and sugar. The man was amazing.

"We set out on a warm clear day, quite unusual for Leningrad. We were roasting in our cabins and it made us all laugh to see piles of woolen clothes and furs kicking around on a day like that. We all knew it, but it seemed hard to believe that in two weeks we were going to need all those things. And need them perhaps for months—nobody knew for how long."

III

THE MEN

THE *Krassin* was built in the yards of Armstrong, Whitworth and Company, at Newcastle, England, in 1917. She was launched under the name of *Sviatogor*, a name you can still read cast in the bronze of her ship's bell forward. She was listed as 10,500 tons displacement, overall length 323 feet, 65 foot beam, and she drew, under full load, 16 feet of water.

A sheath of chrome steel, carried deep enough to protect the engines, ran from bow to stern. Only a line of portholes fifteen feet above the waterline and a few necessary pipes pierced the hull. At the bow the sheath was carried out in the form of a spur, an odd-looking thing, apparently quite useless until she got to work with it, driving it up over the edge of the ice pack, push-

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ing her own hull up after it, and cracking the ice under her weight with the power of her three screws, behind them her ten boilers and 10,600 horse power.

Aboard were 130 persons, including the aviator and three correspondents. There were three women, one of them, Vorontsova, a collaborator of the *Troud*, and Xenia the cook.

At last they had a chance to relax. They could take a turn now and then on deck or drop into the dining saloon. This dining saloon served also as the general meeting room, and at night it became a long dormitory. It was difficult to sleep, though. Nerves were too taut. Conversation in low voices went on tensely till morning streamed in through the port holes. It became a little unbearable, this idleness, this watching misty coasts slip slowly astern as the *Krassin* plowed on at her slow twelve knots. She was built for ice breaking, the *Krassin*, not speed.

Here were the radiograms. Was there news?

"Be quiet comrades, listen, news."

"June 17. Three survivors of the *Italia* have



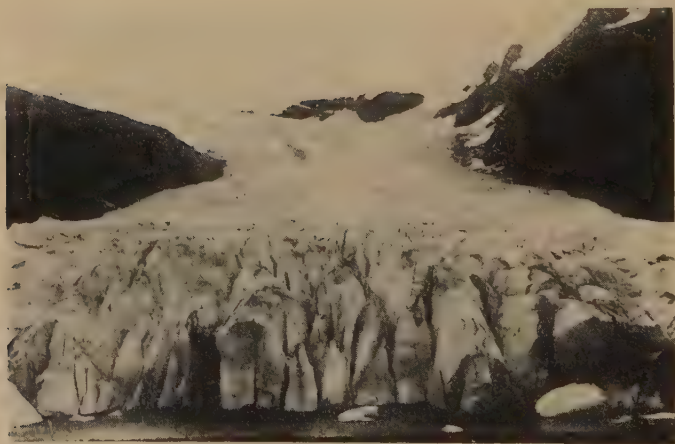
Part of the Ship's Company.



A Group of the Officers
Dr. Srednevsky, top row, extreme left.



Tchoukhnovsky and his Assistants.
These were the men stranded on Cape Wrede.



One of the Glaciers of Spitzbergen.

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been picked up by the Norwegian sealer *Hobby*."

Was it true? What was happening? Would they ever reach the ice! Still the same maddening twelve knots!

Up forward of the stack Tchoukhnovsky fiddled with gadgets on his plane. A turn of the deck as far as the after stack and he was back again, touching, adjusting, caressing.

On the 18th Samoilovitch hung up just forward of the pilot house a great chart of the arctic regions and for an hour explained the plans of the expedition.

Samoilovitch was tall, a finely set-up man. Distinctly of a slavic type he had almost a Mongoloid look in his keen little eyes. He spoke in a soft, low pitched voice with an air of deep calm and reflection. With this gentleness he combined a keen sensitivity to what went on about him and a quick understanding of what men were trying to tell him, or trying not to tell him. His will was unruffled, but unshakable.

Although he was only forty-nine, the *Krassin's*

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was his fourteenth expedition into the arctic. He knew, probably as well as any living man, the geology of the far north. In 1912 he had discovered the great coal mines at Vadven Bay, Spitzbergen, now being worked. Two lands he knew beyond any others, Nova Zembla, east of the White Sea in latitude 71° North, where he had set up a wireless station, and Franz Josef land, east of Spitzbergen far under the eightieth parallel. He was a loyal communist, though not a member of the party, and directed the Institute of Arctic Studies at Leningrad where he had founded the Museum of the North.

Ivanov, Samoilovitch's secretary, served as general secretary of the expedition. He was only twenty-three, but this was his fourth trip into the arctic. He was a student under Samoilovitch and Bogoraz-Tan, and was already making a name for himself in scientific circles by his splendid studies in oceanography and in the topography of the north. I like to think of him as a fine representative of that new class of intellectuals in Russia born of the Communist Revolution, a

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keen, studious mind always in contact with the working masses.

Oras, an Esthonian from Reval, was the government agent and more or less chief assistant to Samoilovitch. As a boy of twenty in the Czarist Naval Academy at Leningrad he had seen the outbreak of the Revolution. He joined the Communist Party and fought as a marine in the civil wars of 1919. From 1920 to 1923 he became again a junior officer, this time in the Soviet Navy. In 1923 he was assigned to the command of the cruiser *Admiral Makarov*. In 1924 he was transferred to the heavy cruiser *Ouritsky*. In 1925 he was ordered to Paris as naval attaché of the Soviet Legation to negotiate, vainly as it proved, for the return of the Russian ships interned at Bizerte, Tunis, and seized by the French. In 1926 he served on various missions in Germany and Holland and from then until early in 1928 he was naval attaché of the Soviet Legation in Sweden. Here he learned the Scandinavian languages. The organization of the relief expedition found him in Leningrad as vice-pres-

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ident of the commission of ports and shipyards.

Another Esthonian, the son of a fisherman, was the Captain of the *Krassin*, Egghi. A boyhood of studying and saving between fishing trips finally put him through nautical school with a navigator's license in his pocket. He went to sea, first on sailing craft, then on steamers. He visited the coasts of both Americas, the Mediterranean, Africa. On a voyage from America in 1913 his ship encountered the burning liner *Volturmo* and stood by. Egghi was one of the heroes of the rescue. One hundred and two passengers were finally carried to safety and Egghi received rewards and decorations from the Governments of Great Britain, Russia and the United States. The medals were beautifully cast; the rewards totaled \$26.75.

Egghi then returned to his nautical studies at Riga during the early years of the war. Hardly had he received his master's license, when he was conscripted and sent to the front as a private. Two years later he was transferred to Archangel, common seaman on a mine layer.

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When the Revolution broke out he went to Norway on a coasting schooner, only to be deported; not to Russia, but to be a sailor with the White Armies on the Murmansk coast. His next trip was to England. Finally in 1920 he reached the soil of the U.S.S.R.

Then he was third officer for two years on an expedition along the Siberian coast. In 1922 he was back in Leningrad, first officer of the ice-breaker *Lenin*, captain in 1924, then captain of the *Krassin* and in charge of both vessels.

Berezkine was an anomaly aboard the *Krassin*. He was not an explorer nor a seaman, but a scientist, brought frankly as such for the value to the world of his observations in the north. He was eminent in the fields of oceanography and meteorology and represented the Geophysical Observatory of Leningrad.

Day after day for hours he glued his ear to the receiving phones of the radio, much to the annoyance of the correspondents eager to send stories to their papers. But he picked up valuable weather reports from Dietskoie Selo near Lenin-

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grad, from Oslo, from Sweden and England, and even from Vladivostok.

Every day Berezkine made surveys for two maps he was constructing. He heaved over the lead line from time to time and noted the soundings. He recorded the temperature of the water every few minutes of latitude and tested the salinity at various points. He studied ocean currents with great care, watching the bearing and force of the surface streams, and trying to learn what he could of flows at greater depths. He worked on bottom contours for hours and, where he could, pieced in the gaps of the surveys of Nansen and the Prince of Monaco. He corrected quite a few errors commonly accepted in geographic circles.

As a man as he was a delightful companion, reserved, quiet, unaffected; one whose friendship I often miss.

Tchoukhnovsky, the aviator; Straube, the second officer; Alexeiev, observer and wireless operator on the airplane; and the two mechanics, Fedotov and Chelaguine, I did not

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meet. They had been left at Kings Bay and were hard at work repairing their plane when I boarded the *Krassin* at Stavanger. I am sorry to say that I could learn only meager details about them from others on the expedition. Tchoukhnovsky, I was told, was thirty-three. He began his career as an aviator with the Czarist flying forces toward the end of the war. After the Revolution, like Babouchkine, he turned his attention to aerial exploration of the far north, particularly of the regions about Nova Zembla.

To leave these men out, when they contributed so greatly to a heroic and dangerous expedition, is not a sign that their work is overlooked. One of the sad features of the life of a journalist is the haste with which he must work. His duty is to be on the spot and record what he sees and learns. Even if the report is incomplete, the historian can use what there is of it, and combine with it the work of some other reporter, thankful that the reporter has not stepped beyond his proper field.

The *Krassin* offered no soft berth to her men.

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The peculiar construction required in an ice-breaker cramped the engine room and forced the stokers and oilers to work in a temperature often as high as 140 degrees. The guard rails, and in fact any metal object, were too hot to touch.

Pay did not vary greatly. The stokers received the smallest salary, 135 roubles a month (about \$81) and the officers 225 roubles (about \$135). Half the wages were paid direct to the men and half reserved for their families.

The food aboard ship was the same for all, bread, light or dark as one chose, rice, vegetables, cheese, eggs, and cold storage or salted meat. In port there was always whatever fresh foods were available.

The officers' quarters, described aboard as a kind of first-class section, included the general assembly saloon. Here there were portraits of Lenin and Krassin, and it was here that concerts were given and strangers received aboard ship. The crew did not live or eat here, but there was no bar of inequality. Any member of the crew was free at any time to use this section, and was

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made to feel entirely at home there. If he wished to talk with an officer he drew up an armchair and talked. The crews' quarters were as clean, neat and well appointed as the officers' except that they were a little smaller.

Off duty, the men were free to do as they pleased, and while some went to get a little extra sleep, many dropped into the saloon to browse through the 2,000 volume library, or pass the time away over a game of chess. In the saloon was posted the official bulletin, appearing twice a day, and the unofficial mural newspaper, which might contain anything from news to a caricature of the commanders.

The saloon, too, was the music room of the *Krassin*, where Samoilovitch sometimes gave a piano concert. After they returned to Stavanger and received a phonograph as a present from the Soviet Legation at Oslo, the machine was in constant demand to hear "that pig of a Chaliapin" sing the *Volga Boatmen*. Here, too, the officers gave lectures, six in all, on the voyage, including such subjects as aviation, the economic, social

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and political structure of the countries visited, and the geology of the north.

The stokers and oilers had the hardest work, though it was lightened as much as was possible on a ship, particularly a ship with the restricted crew imposed by the voyage of the *Krassin*. The stokers stood four-hour watches and the oilers six. Any extra work was always paid for.

Organization and discipline were maintained on the *Krassin* by the feeling of duty, the recognition of authority, with a knowledge of its limits, and the feeling of each man for his own responsibilities. The command of the expedition rested in a committee of three composed of Samoilovitch, Oras and Tchoukhnovsky. Under them was a ship's committee composed of men of various positions whose chief work was to oversee the expenditure of public money. Captain Egghi, of course, was in complete command of the ship. The moral authority rested in the communist cell of which Rykov, a mechanician, was secretary. It had, however, no administrative command at all.

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Discipline was maintained by a council headed by Philippov, another mechanician.

I was present on a number of occasions which indicated how this unusual organization of a ship functioned. I heard the ship's committee, two officers and one of the crew, discussing expenses and attempting to keep them as low as possible. All three were united in this effort.

I listened to a request of the engine room force for twenty-four hours' leave. The *Krassin* was then in port, there was no pressing demand for their work and the men were worn out. They asked the chief engineer if he would allow them the leave and promised to make it up the next day. The chief engineer discussed the matter with his superiors and decided to allow it on their agreement to work all the harder the next day.

When the *Krassin* sailed from Stavanger for Bergen I had a last example of the same sort. Two men who had reputations for being rather surly and poor spirited workers overstayed their shore leave at Stavanger and were forced to overtake the *Krassin* on a mail boat. When they came

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aboard they presented themselves to the captain with these words:

“We haven’t come to ask you to excuse us. There isn’t any excuse. For the moment, will you pay the mail boat for bringing us out and take it from our salaries? Later the comrades will discipline us.”

The more I knew of the *Krassin* and the crew who manned her in the many fields of the expedition, the more I was struck with the ability of those who organized it. It was a group brought together almost overnight, but each man in it seemed to be perfect in the field of work he was assigned to do. Scientific specialists of various kinds, navigators, arctic experts, seamen, each picked up here and there at an hour’s notice wherever one could be found, but each able, each coöperative, all working flawlessly together. This rigid limitation of number was necessary, owing to the impossibility of sending more supplies to the *Krassin*, once she was deep in the ice fields. Instead of four six-hour shifts of oilers and stokers, she carried two twelve-hour shifts.



The Commanders—Tchoukhnovsky, Samoilovitch, Oras.



Blumstein.



Captain Egghi.

IV

TO THE RESCUE

THE *Krassin* sailed from Leningrad on the afternoon of June 15, 1928. Chpanov's despatches give the best picture of the early days of the expedition.

"To starbord we can see the coast of Finland creeping slowly astern, a narrow band of pale green. Not a sign of swell shows on the sea, but the *Krassin* rolls and pitches in long slow beats.

"As I write these lines we have been told that a plane is coming from Leningrad with some delayed supplies. We can send letters back if we wish. Apparently the whole company wishes to, for the dining saloon has become a crowded office, each man hastily writing a last letter or two.

"Bit by bit those of us who are not seamen are becoming accustomed to the life on shipboard. Everybody has something assigned to him, and

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the entire company stands four-hour watches. This morning we reporters were the chambermaids. We made the beds, dusted the furniture and made everything shipshape.

"We reporters have decided to publish our own newspaper aboard ship, 'The Ice Breaker.' It won't be a real paper, only a sheet tacked on the bulletin board, but everything that goes on will get down there. Feeling our prerogatives as editors, we asked Samoilovitch for a chart to put in our cabin. We can have one, he said, when we touch Denmark and pick up a new lot.

"At dinner we can't seem to talk about anything but the *Italia*.

"When we set out the *Krassin* was pretty much of a mess. The anchor came up the minute the last piece of freight was aboard and it's only in the past few days that things have been put in order. Now we're spick and span. The weather is clear and hot.

"From the deck we can see islands almost every hour. Usually they lie long low strips of gray blue along the horizon. Sometimes the

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nearer ones seem to drift toward us like low smoke clouds carried by a faint wind. We slip by them and they sink slowly into the haze astern. I could make out Dagoe, Oesel, Gotland, Oeland and Bornholm. Now we are abreast of Fehmarn Island, part of Denmark. Through the telescope I can see houses clustering a hillside, their sharp, red roofs seeming to point in towards each other. Up on the hill is a tall tower, all white. Overhead is a plane, flying the Berlin-Stockholm mail route.

“The wireless operator is busy all day long tapping away at his machine. He is accused of chatting idly with the operators on other ships to kill time. At dinner he gives us all the gossip of the ocean and tells us the passing ships wish us good luck.”

“General Order No. 1.

“Because of the extreme importance of the conservation of supplies on a polar expedition, a commission has been appointed with full charge of this matter: Srednevsky (the ship’s doctor),

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Brenkopf (second officer) and Dolgoplov (delegate elected by the crew). This commission will take charge of the stowing, care and distribution of supplies commencing at once.

(Signed) SAMOILOVITCH,
Commander.

“On board the ice-breaker *Krassin*, 16 June, 16 hrs. 30 m.”

On the night of June 15 they touched at Kronstadt for water.

June 16 in the Gulf of Finland a plane overtook them bringing supplies for Tchoukhnovsky.

June 17 they passed Reval at the mouth of the Gulf and in the afternoon passed well off Gotland Island.

June 18 they skirted the coast of Sweden.

June 19 they touched at Fehmarn Island and picked up a Danish pilot for the passage of the Belt between Zealand and Fünen Islands. In the evening they steamed out into the Kattegat.

June 21, 6 P. M., they reached Bergen, Norway.

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To go back to Chpanov's despatches:

"On the deck aft a group of seamen are playing dominos and now and then tossing bits of fish to the gulls. Extraordinary thing, even here Samoilovitch has impressed the aim of the expedition. These men have a chart spread out before them and between moves of the game they discuss the plans of the expedition to save Nobile, to advance science, and (to them this also is important) to bring honor to the flag of the Soviet Republic.

"At Korsøer the straight narrows down to little more than a mile, it seems. The city itself, an ancient Danish town, crowds out on a long point towards us, its little white houses with their brilliant red roofs shimmering in the sun. Here we changed our pilot. The new man brought aboard a bundle of newspapers which we grabbed eagerly, partly to see the news, partly, I'm afraid, to read stories about ourselves. The newspaper *Slavo* had given us a story of several columns advising us not to go to Spitzbergen but to work

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towards Archangel. That furnished us a good laugh.

“The Danes gave us a great welcome. A crowd of small boats put out from Korsøer and crowded around the *Krassin*, cheering and shouting, ‘Hurrah for the Soviet Republic!’ From one boat we caught the cry in Russian. We lined up on the deck and shouted back to them.

“When some of the Danes began to sing, a seaman ran to his cabin and came back to the rail with a guitar. He threw his legs across the gunwale and played them the *International*, *Trique*, and a few other pieces. The playing was a bit personal in style, but the Danes waved their hats and cheered good naturedly. As we steamed slowly on, their cheers and laughter died in the distance.

“To-day the sea and sky were a perfect blue. The Kattegat was crowded with small craft, slipping by us. The old city was a blaze of colors. The farms stretched into the distance like toys. Slowly Denmark sank under the horizon and disappeared.

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"To-day we were told that we could use fresh water to wash in. Six days at sea without being able to wash in fresh water had been enough to make us enthusiastic over this sudden permission.

"We learned that the machinery for distilling fresh water from the sea had been using too much coal, coal which we needed for the engines. With short supplies of fresh water and no time to stop in ports for more, it was natural that we could not use it to wash with. But try washing with salt water when you have a little coal dust ground into your pores! For five days, Tchoukhnovsky, covered with grease from working on his plane, had been bewailing the restriction, and all of us, even our philosophical Xenia, the cook, had joined a little in the growling.

"To-day, however, on the big chart in the saloon where our progress is marked with little flags, a flag appeared on the North Sea. We had cleared the Skagerak. We lined up at the door of the washroom to reach the still warm trickle of fresh water once more running from the spigot.

"As I came out of the washroom I saw on the

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horizon to starboard a long line of jagged mountains, their snow-capped peaks glistening in the sun. We were skirting the coast of Norway and should soon be in Bergen.

“This proved to be the reason for the permission to use fresh water. We had to stop for supplies at Bergen anyway, and once there, it would be easy to obtain fresh water. Besides, we had to get the dirt off us; after all, one does have to maintain some care for appearance before Europeans.

“The night before we reached Bergen we rode through a heavy storm. In the morning as we approached the entrance to the long channel up to the port, the wind had gone down, but a heavy sea was still running. A small launch put out to us with the pilot, but for more than half an hour it was impossible for him to get aboard. He stood in the waist of his little boat while she pitched up and down alongside the *Krassin*, now up almost level to our deck, now far down in the trough of a wave, the tall steel side of the *Krassin* like a great wall over his launch. At last the pilot

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caught the end of a ladder dropped for him and climbed aboard.

"A little boy of about eight, and a girl, the pilot's daughter, we learned later, stayed in the launch. The girl stood at the tiller, her short hair blowing about her face in the wind. She smiled at us, cupped her hands around her mouth and shouted, 'Levele Riouschen' (Hurrah for the Russians). Then pointing to herself she shouted gaily, 'Norio,' 'Norio'!

"We thought she meant that her name was Norio and shouted back with the best Norwegian we knew, 'Morgen freken Norio.' Afterwards we learned that Norio meant the name of her country, Norway (Norge), but to the ship's company she remained Freken Norio.

"The girl put down her tiller and let the launch drop away to leeward. Splashed with spray she stood easily erect in the pitching little boat and waved good-bye to us. We lined the rail and shouted down the wind, 'Good-bye, Freken Norio.'

"At lunch the pilot downed a glass of vodka

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and complimented himself on having the privilege of piloting a Soviet vessel. Then he began telling us about his daughter, our Freken Norio. For more than a year, he said, she had been trying to persuade him to leave the Nationalist Party and join the Communists, but nothing could make him do it, the pilot insisted. Not that he had anything against communists, he assured us; he had no objection to his daughter belonging to the Party, but not for him. He had communist sympathies, he explained, but after all Communism was international, and Norway, of course, . . . well, Norway, was about the best that countries came. Norway first, and then Communism if we chose. But Freken Norio, he added, regarded such sentiments as weak; she was an out-and-out Communist. Well, as for him, he was so 'nationalist' about her, as he put it, that he didn't have much sentiment left over to bother with politics.

"Soon we entered a long channel, almost like a canal, only entirely natural. At the sides tremendous mountains came down sheer to the

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water's edge, their sides heavy dark green with pines and spruce. The water was as still and shimmering as glass and of a perfect turquoise blue. The pilot told us that the fjords were always this way, enormously deep, and the water as still as though it were frozen. I judged that the width of the fjord ran between two and a half and three miles. Here and there it broadened out a bit."

V

TO THE NORTH

ON the twenty-first the *Krassin* dropped anchor in Bergen Harbor. Coal and water were the needs. Even powerful ships have almost human weaknesses. It was two days out to coal ship and a dirty job.

The weather turned raw. Intermittent cold rain drizzled over the harbor and the city sank under a thick gray fog bank. Through the mist the lights of the stores and houses shone out across the harbor in the evening. Everybody wanted to go ashore. The purser was told he might pay out a fraction of each man's salary and the ship's company lined up at his office.

Once ashore it was too late in the evening, all the stores were closed. The men plodded the dripping streets for a while and then wound up at a moving picture.

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The *Krassin* went on with her coaling. As each grab bucket swung over the side from the scow the dust settled gently fore and aft. Faces and hands became black. Throats choked with the powdered coal. Underfoot the black mud oozed out the scuppers and the men tracked it wherever they walked.

On the twenty-second Professor Hoel, a Norwegian, a friend of Samoilovitch and an expert in geological research in the polar regions, came aboard. With the permission of the Soviet Government he was permanently attached to the expedition.

The twenty-third was the feast of St. John, a great event in northern Europe as it is in Russia. A large crowd came down to see the *Krassin*, led by a group of Pioneers (Communist Boy Scouts) carrying red flags and singing the *International*.

At 2 A. M. on the twenty-fourth the *Krassin* had finished coaling. To quote a workman of whom more will be written soon, "She was off to

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find a harder berth, more becoming to her iron breast."

On the twenty-fourth, with two Norwegian pilots, they cleared the fjords and steamed into the open sea.

On the twenty-fifth they passed under the Arctic Circle and toward evening sighted the Lofoten Islands to the westward.

The twenty-sixth was a fine clear day. For three hours the *Krassin* waited for the change in the tide to negotiate a bad channel. To the east mountains rose, covered with spruce.

Near midnight the pilots left. The *Krassin* was clear of the fjords. Open sea lay ahead to Spitzbergen. Norway vanished from sight astern. Egghi began to push his engines to their limit.

One clear night a schooner hove to under the quarter and signaled the *Krassin*. She was a fisherman with fifty pounds of fresh mackerel as a gift for the ice-breaker.

On the twenty-seventh the sun failed to set. They were in the arctic summer of perpetual day.

Heavy fog and sharp cold appeared suddenly

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on the twenty-eighth and the *Krassin's* fog horns began their never-ending shrieks. The vessel carried three warning devices, a bell, a whistle and a piercing siren used for catching the echoes coming back from distant hills.

During the morning the first iceberg was sighted through a rift in the fog. The *Krassin* doubled the giant, "easily as tall as a church," which drifted on toward the south, surrounded by broken fragments like a planet with her satellites.

At 2 A. M. on the twenty-ninth the *Krassin* sighted the coast of Bear Island in latitude $74^{\circ} 30'$. Still she pressed on at full speed. That night she received the first message from the Italian base ship, *City of Milan*, and another from the *Malyguine*, far to the eastward on Barents Sea beyond longitude 20° East.

The next day the *Krassin* collided with several ice cakes in the thick fog. One cake was from ten to twelve feet thick and damaged the rudder. The anchor was dropped and for several hours repair work went on. By three in the afternoon

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the rudder was in proper shape again and the vessel pressed on through the gathering ice.

The men put on their arctic clothes for the first time and strutted the deck in great pride. Now they were real explorers of the arctic, and they weren't a bit cold yet.

At ten in the evening they sighted the point of Prince Charles Foreland, a large island west of Spitzbergen. The ice had vanished but the fog held thick. Overhead the sky was almost clear and dazzlingly bright. A radio arrived from Nobile, already saved, thanking the expedition and wishing it success.

Another message told the company that the Swedish aviator Lundborg, Nobile's rescuer, was down on the ice pack, short of food and in need of immediate help.

On the thirtieth the *Krassin* passed six miles to the north of Spitzbergen. The sea was covered with ice, but the weather held fine. At five in the evening the vessel reached the southern edge of the pack ice, an interminable barrier stretching away east and west around the pole. The *Krassin*

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begun cutting her channel. She drove her bow on the edge of the ice. For an instant the ship hung, her bow clear of the water. Two great pieces cracked under her with a report like heavy artillery. Until July 18 this was her program—ride up on the ice and crack it under her; back off and drive her bow up again, unceasingly.

VI

SHIPWRECKS

SQUARE on the eightieth parallel is Northeast Land, a huge island separated on the west from the northern end of Spitzbergen by the narrow band of Hinlopen Strait. Foyen Island lies off the north coast of Northeast Land, almost at its easternmost tip. A great peninsula runs into the north ended by a headland called North Cape. Beyond the cape lies a group of jagged rocks, The Seven Islands. On July 1, the *Krassin* sighted Seven Islands. Her object was to pass to the north of them, and head for Cape Platen, the last great headland on Northeast Land.

The ice pack was solid, without rifts or faults. The *Krassin* was built for work on the Neva and in the Gulf of Finland where the thickness of the ice never exceeds four feet. Here she was forced

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to cut her channel day after day through ice running ten to twelve feet thick. Again and again she would drive her bow over the edge of the pack without result. She must back off and try it again. The massive thickness of the ice held her weight and parried the shock of her bow. To make six hundred feet in two hours became excellent work.

From the crow's nest a vessel was reported some fifteen miles ahead, frozen fast in the pack. She was the Norwegian schooner *Braganza*, chartered by the Italians for rescue work, now locked immovably in the ice and abandoned. It was finally decided that no hope lay in trying to pass north of Seven Islands. The *Krassin* steamed back through her channel to tackle the Beyern Narrows between Seven Islands and North Cape.

In the evening a huge white bear was sighted half a mile away, apparently ambling playfully along the ice. Some one sounded the siren. At the sudden shriek in the arctic solitude Michael raised himself on his hind paws in a moment of

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perplexity, and then bounded away, his white fur sinking into the jumbled ice blocks.

During the second of July the vessel made some progress through the Narrows. She was almost half way through, when a sudden north-east wind sprang up, threatening to drive the ice, and the cornered *Krassin* with it, onto the rocks of Cape Platen. It was a ticklish moment.

A general council of the ship's company was called. If their calculations were correct, they had approached within sixty or seventy-five miles of at least one of the groups of the Italians. No one proposed to go back. The question was how to go on.

Several volunteered to go out on an expedition afoot, but the officers refused to allow this. Nothing could be gained by such an expedition, they pointed out, and even so, in the condition of the ice, torn and piled blocks with huge ravines running through it, the men could use neither skis nor sledges. For the same reason it was useless to use the airplane. It would be impossible to take off properly, or to make a landing, even if

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they did find the Italians. It was finally decided to push on toward Foyn Island in the hope of finding a flat stretch of ice.

Until the third the *Krassin* pushed ahead, slowly smashing her way through the ice, strained and groaning from keel to tie plates. At last she was clear of Seven Islands.

Once having passed these, the task of reaching Foyn Island seemed materially easier. The vessel drove away at the ice, riding high on it and crashing it down with her weight. Huge pieces cracked off, broke under the wedge drive of her bow and drifted astern in smaller pieces. One piece failed to shatter as it cracked off the field and slid under her. A slow scrape all along the bottom on the port side. A quick jangling of engine bells. Too late! A tingling ripping metallic sound, a sudden insane change in the rhythmic beat of the engines. Silence. The cake had fouled on the starboard propeller. One of the blades had been torn off. The propeller and one engine were now useless.

"We stood and looked at each other. No one

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said a word, what was the use? Everyone had the same thought: all our work gone for nothing? Were we through? Had we failed where so many had confidence in us?

"We stood on the deck fidgeting a little with our idle hands. The engine room crew came up, bare to the waist, covered with sweat. They had forgotten their coats. One of them rolled a cigarette nervously, spilling the tobacco on the deck. On the afterdeck a row of men silently lined the rail staring astern at the long channel of black water we had cut. Already the ice was forming again along the edges. Were they going to keep it thawed by looking at it? In a few hours it would be frozen over, unbreakable. We should be locked in the ice like the *Braganza*. And for how long?

"That didn't worry us much, comrade. The *Krassin* was well built, and we had supplies and a radio. But we thought of those men we had never seen, struggling, exhausted, starving, alone in this terrible desert of ice.

"On deck Samoilovitch, Oras, Erchov, the

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chief engineer, Hoel, the old Norwegian, and one or two others stood in a little group talking in low voices. One by one the men drifted over and stood around them, a silent listening circle. One of the correspondents, wrapped in a great fur overcoat, left the circle and came nervously along the deck towards us. He was trembling and looked like a beaten man.

“ ‘It’s all over; it’s done for,’ he murmured.

“ ‘What’s done for?’

“He passed us without a word and disappeared down a hatch. One of us, a young fellow, spat carefully on the white ice.

“Finally Samoilovitch, Tchoukhnovsky and Oras decided we would stay where we were and hope for a storm. There was nothing else to do.”

Sometimes sudden storms crack the ice pack into loose, separated floes through which clever navigators can worm a ship.

July 4 they were still in the same place. The weather was clear. Several groups put on their skiis and scattered over the ice in the neighborhood of the ship. Berezkine, the only officer

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aboard holding a commission in the Soviet Navy, busied himself with his surveying work.

"The charts of these regions are wretched. You never know what the bottom is going to be. Soundings run from two fathoms to over a hundred. Perhaps we can learn something."

There was no false bravery about Berezkine. He was blond, and appeared almost as timid as a child; he was light hearted, but iron underneath. He needed help with his sounding line and the heavy lead. He took T., the *Pravda* correspondent with him, despite the latter's objections. "A little help with this crank," said Berezkine, "there's nothing to be excited about." The sounding showed fifty-six fathoms, and Berezkine noted it on his charts.

In a stretch where the grinding of the pack had shattered the ice into a mass of tiny fragments, they raised a flock of ducks. Dr. Srednevsky shot one. No one else succeeded, for the ducks were wary.

After lunch a round of vodka was ordered by the commander to keep spirits high. The men

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became cheerful. Out came guitars, balalaikas and accordeons, and everyone sang.

During the evening divers went over the side in the hope of fixing the broken propeller. They learned only the extent of the damage, which they found beyond repair.

On July 5, as the day before, they were locked fast. Samoilovitch and Hoel arranged a meeting of the company in the dining saloon. They told of a Russian cemetery of unknown antiquity on Spitzbergen. Samoilovitch told the story of a strange crime committed by some sailors, only discovered long afterwards by the confession of a dying man. It was like pages out of a novel.

On July 6 the wind finally began to shift the ice pack. Cracks appeared and the *Krassin* gingerly pushed her way ahead looking for some flat ice from which to launch the plane. About eleven o'clock a stretch of level ice a little more than a mile square was sighted and the *Krassin* began grinding through the ice toward it.

This proved to be a seven-hour job, though only a distance of two miles. The ship drove her

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way through the cracks, but several times was forced to attempt breaking the ice, for all her crippled engines. At last she came alongside the field and moored to the edge.

Tchoukhnovsky was satisfied with his air port. To get his ship to the ice an inclined plane was built from the level of the superstructure where the plane was stowed down to the ice level and then a slide carried straight out for nearly three hundred feet.

"This is about what the air port was like. An ice field covered with three feet of snow, though here and there much less, in one point as little as six inches. Drifts and little mounds dotted the field, and in some places upturned blocks of ice rose through the snow. Narrow cracks ran through the field, sometimes as much as eighteen inches deep, covered with a thin bridge of ice making them entirely invisible. The task of taking off and landing on such a field was not strikingly easy."

The *Krassin* was 20 knots northwest of Charles XII Island. Some gulls of an unblemished,

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sparkling white had made their homes in the mastheads and circled about the ship. In Norway they are called ivory birds.

On July 7 the airplane was lowered to the field and the wings were attached. The machine carried three motors of 300-horsepower each and 100 gallons of gasoline. The tanks were filled.

One of the stokers killed a fifty pound seal. When skinned, the animal proved to be exceedingly fat and it seemed a shame not to use this fine fresh meat, although everyone knew that the taste was unpleasant.

The crew's cook fried the liver with butter and onions. It proved to be an excellent dish. Tchoukhnovsky, passing the galley door during the process, asked for a piece for the officers' table. The delicacy was universally approved.

The correspondents and the stokers set to work to paint the ice. Using oil they marked out the limits of the air field so the plane in flight could see where to land.

On Sunday, July 8, Tchoukhnovsky made his first flight. After twenty minutes in the air he

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flattened out along the field to make his landing. The right ski caught on a piece of ice, and tore loose. Tchoukhnovsky felt his wing dip and touch the field. Realizing what had happened, he put on his power and climbed. He circled the field again and with great care came down, balancing the plane on the right ski. He made a perfect landing as the ship's company stood around, their hearts in their throats. Dr. Srednevsky was already half way across the field toward him.

A heavy fog fell, accompanied with greater cold. At noon the thermometer stood a few degrees above freezing. In the evening it had dropped to one below. In celebration of the first flight a measure of vodka was ordered around.

On the ninth the *Krassin* was unable to move, but the men repaired the torn ski of the plane and replaced it.

The second engineer, who had never been in a diver's suit, decided to go over for a look at the propeller. Experienced men taught him how to breathe, move and make signals under water and he went over the side. He reported that the pro-

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pellor could not be repaired outside of a shipyard.

The men went hunting gulls. One of them, Lehman, spent the whole of a bright arctic night so bent on trapping them that he lost all sense of time and returned to the ship asking for supper as breakfast was being served.

So far I have told of the *Krassin* up to July 10. Here I hope that the U.S.S.R., so careful to conceal what it knows of the rescue, will excuse me. Only a few hours before the last personal documents were sent to Russia, I found aboard the *Krassin* at Stavanger a diary kept aboard ship by Martin Lehman, an electrician.

For a few hours before the document was forwarded to Russia I had it in my possession. It was an oblong copybook of 155 pages, bound in green with a red stripe.

Lehman, who permitted me to see his journal and quote him, is a man of forty-three who had traveled widely about the world. Day by day on the *Krassin* he recorded what happened. I found that his observations were only too careful. I compared them with the accounts of others, filled

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gaps which Lehman had left, and studied them carefully. In the end I found them, naïve in spots to be sure, but accurate, the inescapable court record, almost, of the days they covered. I shall use them completely, although I shall explain some points where I am not bound, as he was, by official orders and by diffidence.

VII

THREE MEN ON THE ICE

FOR anyone who doubts the authenticity of the document I am going to quote, I have a few notes to make. I copied the journal with great care, even to following mistakes of grammar and spelling, for Lehman was a Lett. Naturally I am not going to attempt to reproduce these faults in translation. Nor am I going to follow his sentence structure, for he leaves out almost every mark of punctuation. But I shall follow his account exactly, even in its apparent contradictions. Nor shall I leave out passages which contradict or make no mention of events told me by other witnesses, often eye-witnesses.

Inevitably Lehman could not have seen everything; he had his own work to do. Further Lehman had a strict feeling for discipline in a curious German sense, unlike the self-imposed discipline

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of the Russians. He had a keen sense of his place aboard ship and of the things proper to that position. These facts must be borne in mind.

Lehman's Journal

"Tuesday, July 10. The weather began to clear. Our aviators and the mechanics felt they could make a flight to-day. But the weather still seemed uncertain. Nevertheless at 4.25 they were ready and flew off toward the north. There were five men in the machine, two pilots, two mechanics and a camera man. They flew very fast and, although the horizon was clear, in half an hour they were out of sight, even with a telescope, because a thick cloud bank came up between us and them, hiding them from us."

Corrections: Other important witnesses do not agree to these details. The fog about the *Krassin* was so heavy that the officers were reluctant to allow the flight. Tchoukhnovsky insisted. He pointed to Berezkin's weather reports which indicated the approach of a heavy storm that

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would break up the landing field. (Berezkin proved to be correct.) The taking off was in a fog which obscured objects at sixty feet. The plane disappeared in a few seconds, not in half an hour. Either Lehman was not on the field or did not remember accurately what took place.

There were five men in the plane, Tchoukhnovsky at the controls, Straube, assistant pilot, Fedotov and Chelaguine, mechanics, and Blumstein, operator of the moving-picture camera. On each side of the plane two men were posted to sweep the horizon with telescopes. The plane carried supplies, furs, woollen footgear, guns and ammunition. These were to be dropped by parachute if men were found.

Lehman's Journal continued: "We kept contact with them by radio. They told us that in the part of the ice where they were, there was no fog and that they had discovered on the ice a group of three men, but no one knew whether it was the group led by Malmgrene (*sic*), which had left Nobile and was going southwest in search of land, or if it was the group which with dogs

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and sledges had left the *Braganza*, now a total loss."

It is evident that speculation was rife aboard the *Krassin*. The effect of Tchoukhnovsky's radio was tremendous. "We see three men on the ice." One of the men was lying down, the other two were standing, waiving pieces of cloth. Blumstein ground his camera. We must see that film. Shall we?

It seems that at that time, July 10, there were no longer three men on the ice, but only two, Mariano and Zappi. Tchoukhnovsky and his comrades were deceived. At least this seems the most reasonable conclusion.

On July 10 the survivors of Malmgren's group no longer had anything to eat. They had spread a pair of trousers on the ice hoping that the scavenger gulls, which attack corpses, would be taken in by this lure. On the suit they had placed a trap cut from an empty preserve tin held up by a thread and baited with a tiny piece of bread.

Was it this that the aviators took for a third man, lying on the ice? Some recent remarks of

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Tchoukhnovsky would seem to confirm this. In any case the film would show.

It is almost certain that on July 10 Malmgren was no longer alive. On this point at least, Mariano and Zappi were in agreement with everyone else.

As for the men from the *Braganza*, we shall learn more about them later.

Tchoukhnovsky had prepared a letter to drop to Viglieri's group, the men he expected to find first. "In the name of the Soviet Committee for aid to the Nobile Expedition, and in the name of the company of the *Krassin*, the pilot Tchoukhnovsky is delighted to greet the aviators of the *Italia*. Tchoukhnovsky is flying a trimotored Junker, mounted on skiis, and intends, as soon as weather conditions permit, to land near the party. Please prepare and indicate with signals the best place for the landing considering the extent and thickness of the ice. The place chosen should be marked so that the wind blows opposite the direction shown by an indicator stake. The plane must land against the wind."

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When the mechanician Chelaguine, acting as observer, caught sight of the "Malmgren party" he saw in reality only silhouettes. "One man was perched on the point of a sharp block. The second was stretched out on the ice near him, and the third was lying down on a block a little distance away separated from a hillock of ice by a narrow band of water. The whole pan upon which the three were camped was so small and so closely surrounded by large belts of open water that it was absolutely impossible to drop to the men either the food or clothing intended for them. After circling over the men a few times to make sure they knew that they had been seen, the plane headed back for the *Krassin*."

Lehman: "Our aviators have enough gasoline for ten hours of flying and food for three months. But if they have to land on the ice they run the risk of staying there forever, because the ice is so jagged and broken that in landing they can easily be smashed to pieces or at least be unable to take off again."

Lehman must have written these lines as it was

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learned that Tchoukhnovsky had lost his way in the fog and was vainly seeking to find the *Krassin*. In a sense he was stranded in the air, unable to land except at the risk of his life. For this reason the men aboard the *Krassin* reassured one another as best they could by recalling that he had "gasoline enough for ten hours of flying." As a matter of fact the aviators had not three months' supplies with them as Lehman recorded, but only enough for two weeks.

Lehman: "Aboard ship every one is very worried, and every possible measure has been taken, such as forcing the funnels to smoke heavily. To do this, oil was poured into the fireboxes and then rubbish thrown in to make the smoke thicker. I climbed into the cross trees and lit the most powerful of the searchlights. Although the sky was not overcast, the fog continued to grow thicker.

"A radio from the plane said that according to their calculations they had reached the spot where the *Krassin* lay, but that on account of the thick fog they could not see how to land. We

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on the ship began building a huge fire on the ice so that the plane could see the smoke and flames and make a landing. We all set to work and carried out on the ice empty packing cases, barrels of oil, a whole collection of broken, useless junk. On the ice field we built up an immense fire. We carried out from the ship several tubs of tar and then threw on the fire two barrels of old engine oil which had been used already and was stored in the hold. After that we fired off a gun several times, but it was all useless.

“About an hour later we received another radio saying that the plane could see neither the fire nor the ship and had decided, if possible, to land on or near The Seven Islands, which could just be seen through the fog. After that we stopped throwing more fuel on the fire, but it burned until morning.

“Our position to-day, July 10, is latitude $80^{\circ} 53' 8''$ North, longitude $23^{\circ} 27'$ East, about fifty-seven miles from the first position of Nobile's men whom we came to rescue. In the last eleven hours the wind and the current have carried us

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three miles, although we have two ice anchors fast on the pack."

Tchoukhnovsky's plane had two wireless sets, one for use in the air and the other, an emergency set, for sending when on the ground. To set up the latter required a great deal of time and labor. Lehman's description of the anxiety aboard the *Krassin* is much too reserved. For three hours, according to Samoilovitch, absolutely nothing was known about the plane.

Eventually Tchoukhnovsky began to use his radio for more than a few brief messages. He gave the location of the place where he had sighted three men on the ice, said that he had made a safe landing near the shore above Cape Wrede, and urged the commander not to bother about him. Samoilovitch threw his arms about the wireless operator when he brought this message.

"We knew this was heroism." Oras said to me afterwards, "If you had been there, you would understand better how heroic it was. The men gathered around and objected that we could not leave one of our own comrades in danger. Every-

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body loved Tchoukhnovsky. We decided, however, to follow his own advice."

Lehman: "Wednesday, July 11. Early this morning we heard the bad news that our airplane in landing in the fog about twenty-five miles from us had broken two propellers and had damaged the fusilage. None of the men were hurt, however. They have arms and ammunition and can get along one way or another, but they can't get back to the ship. They will have to wait until some one comes for them. In the meantime the plane is entirely unprotected.

"Since morning we have taken off the ice all the machinery used on the landing field, demolished the scaffolding built to take the plane down, and started again through the ice pack toward Nobile's¹ party, that is, the three men Tchoukhnovsky described to us by radio. He saw them on a floating ice cake about six miles to the east of Charles XII Island. We are on this route.

¹Lehman continues indiscriminately to call the two groups of Italians saved by the *Krassin* on July 12, "Nobile's party." At that date General Nobile, carried to safety by the Swedish aviator Lundborg, although leaving his officers and men on the ice, was aboard the *City of Milan* recovering from his hardships. M. P.

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“According to the captain, we have 1,700 tons of coal left. Egghi has decided to go on so long as he still has 1,000 tons left to get back to Kings Bay, Spitzbergen.

“We are making good time. The ice is more and more broken up, but it still floats in great pieces in all kinds of shapes. It is very dirty, covered with sand and seaweed.”

VIII

THE BEAR HUNT

LEHMAN, I'm afraid, missed his calling. He was born to record the words and actions of his fellow men. He has the serenity ideal in a great historian. His mind follows, untroubled, the course of events, wherever they may lead. On the very absence of a critical sense he builds the foundation of his solid worth. He sees and he reports. What he does not see (and only a god can see everything, so multiple are the facets of even a single event) he reports with the safe knowledge that only by approximations are things ever known. When he sets down precisely the event as he saw it, the duty of the writer is done. In writing only for himself, he writes perfectly. The curiosity and impatience of a reader trouble him in no way. His easy neglect of supposedly important things, his dis-

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dain for anything approaching system, his unalterable submission to the rules of a strict chronology, all in all, his utter lack of anything approaching style or composition succeeds inevitably in producing such effects as are diligently sought and rarely found by a professional journalist.

At the time when the crippled *Krassin* was pushing through the ice following Tchoukhnovsky's directions in search of three lost men, July 11, Lehman, with entire calm describes a bear hunt.

"Suddenly at six in the evening some one ran from the deck into our dining saloon shouting, 'Come on, Bears!' We left our dinner and ran on deck, grabbing guns as fast as we could. As I ran to starboard, I heard a disorderly firing from the port. It was a general free-for-all shooting match. Not quite a hundred feet ahead of us, a little to the right, a great polar bear, already wounded, was sitting on a small broken cake of floating ice. Two pretty little cubs ran around her terribly frightened.

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"I learned that the vessel suddenly had run upon a whole family of them, an old female who was wounded in the right thigh, an old male whom I myself didn't see and who escaped into the ice pack, and two cubs, rather well grown ones, though, almost the size of their mother. The little ones, seeing our boat coming nearer, left their mother who was sitting down. We threw a rope ladder out on the pack and the men put on their skiis and, taking their guns, set off after them. But because the ice was so cut up they couldn't use their skiis and left them, chasing the bears on foot.

"The old bear, seeing the men coming nearer, gathered all the strength she had and tried to run away and hide in the piled ice blocks. But the men started firing at her again, and one struck her on the right flank with a dum dum bullet inflicting such a terrible wound that her intestines protruded. In spite of that, she crouched and turned against the men. One man went very close to her and fired. The bullet went through her neck and came out at the back. The

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bear fell full length on the ice and the man ran up and killed her with a club.

“In the meantime the cubs had got quite a way off and were running side by side crossing from one floating cake to another and getting further and further away. Just as the men with their guns began to chase them, the Professor (Samoilovitch) shouted from the bridge that they were not to shoot the cubs but take them alive. But the cubs stood up on their hind feet and charged the first man to come near them. He had taken off his overcoat and caught up within twenty feet of them. When they charged, he jumped and fell into a deep ditch in the ice. The other men seeing that the cubs were going to escape, began firing at them anyway. But they had no luck. In single file the cubs ran on across the pack. Already the whistle was blowing on the ship ordering all the men back aboard.”

At Stavanger the hunters were still angry at having lost the cubs, “through the Professor’s fault.”

“The dead bear was rolled onto a tarpaulin,

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dragged to the ship, hauled aboard and skinned. She was very fat and quite heavy, about 200 kilos."

In Russia bear ham is often eaten, but the polar bear has a serious fault. He smells of fish.

IX

MALMGREN'S PARTY

THE same day, July 11, Lehman: "At ten o'clock in the evening we reached the place where the radio from our plane told us they had seen three men floating on a pan. Every one began to watch the great stretch of ice with sharp attention.

"On the bulletin board the correspondents had posted a notice promising a reward of 100 roubles to the first man to see any one either on the ice or against the horizon. The Commander on his own account promised to add to this 25 roubles. (This sum would be over \$60.)

"Now it became a real hunt for men, instead of for bears, and many eyes became too weary to see. The weather is cloudy, no sun, and the visibility is good. But watching wore the men out rapidly and most went to their bunks early."

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Chpanov's despatches describe the same scene: "A row of binoculars and telescopes encircled the deck watching each hummock, each floating cake. Ever so often some one shouted, 'Look, there they are!' It was always a peak of ice darkened by a shadow."

There was no morning, for there had been no night, but by the normal hour of morning the sun was high and clear. It was half past four. Brenkopf, the officer of the watch, was on the bridge. The *Krassin* ground her way through the breaking ice. Brenkopf noticed on the horizon a black point which seemed to move. He studied it through the telescope. A walrus, perhaps. Anyway it was a black spot and seemed to move. Didn't it seem to have arms? Some thought so. Now it was three miles away. Let us go back to Lehman's Journal.

"Thursday, July 12. Bulletin. The *Krassin's* first success. This morning at five o'clock Brenkopf, the officer of the watch on the bridge, made out Malmgreme's (*sic*) party. About seven the ship had neared the cake where the men were.

MALMGREN'S PARTY

About 600 feet away on a piece no more than sixty feet in diameter a man was standing. Near him another man was lying on the ice, lifting his head from time to time. These men were members of Malmgrene's party, Zappi and Mariano, both aviation officers of the Italian Navy."

For the time being I shall leave Lehman's Journal, to take it up later at the same place. It is important to record by the words of other witnesses the entire circumstances of the finding of the two men.

Chpanov's despatches bear on the subject: "At five in the morning Lieutenant Brenkopf noticed in the stretch of the pack a point which after careful examination was decided to be a human body. It was difficult to make out, but it seemed to be the figure of a man, visible as far as the waist, with arms waving from time to time. It was silhouetted against the sky about two miles to starboard.

"In open water it would have taken hardly ten minutes to reach this point, but in an ice covered sea it took three hours of difficult navigation. The

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nearer we drew the more certain it became that the figure was actually that of a man on the summit of a hillock. Only when we were quite near did we notice a dark object which appeared now and then over a block of ice. It seemed to be a man's head. The man standing on the hillock from time to time raised a pair of binoculars to his eyes and then waved his arms.

"The cake holding the men was so small that in approaching it the ship had to be extremely careful not to jam the neighboring cakes against it and slide it under or break it."

The pan upon which the two men (not three) were found was oval in shape and made up of several small pieces of ice held together insecurely. Parts had been tied to the rest with a cord to prevent the disintegration of the cake. The weather was mild and the ice was melting in the salt water. The *Krassin* did not dare steam very near the survivors for fear of capsizing them. Planks were laid between the cakes for the men to cross. (There seems to be no agreement on the size of the pan upon which Zappi and

MALMGREN'S PARTY

Mariano were found. Some spoke of diameters as small as twelve feet.)

The men who ran out towards them, crossing from cake to cake on the planks, were Vaganov and Philippov, engineers, Dr. Srednevsky, Ivanov, the secretary, and a few others.



WHERE



H BEGINS

1. Site of the *Italia's* Fall.
2. Zappi and Mariano Rescued.
3. Viglieri's Men Rescued.

X

THE RECORD OF AN OPEN HEARING

HERE I must digress from the narrative for a moment and for a moment follow what I hope will be the court record of an open hearing.

Now at about five A. M. July 12 Brenkopf seeing a black object on the ice reached for the whistle cord.

"That was the sweetest music I ever heard," Mariano said afterwards. But Mariano was unable to get up from the ice. It was Zappi who jumped to his feet and waved his arms toward his rescuers.

Samoilovitch, Oras, Ivanov bounded up the companionway four steps at a time. The doctor ordered stretchers brought up. Ropes and planks were assembled.

About seven the *Krassin* stopped. The rescue party clambered down the rope ladder and started towards the Italians, Vaganov and

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Philippov in front, Ivanov and Dr. Srednevsky behind them.

On a partly broken ice pan, held together with rope, they found a man "jumping up and down frantically," Zappi. His long beard was a dirty black. Through the matted, greasy mass his skin showed a pale yellow. His eyes were sparkling, his hands reaching out, trembling.

Zappi was bulky with heavy clothing. He had practically three complete suits. A set of underwear, woolen outer clothing and a fur overcoat were his own. Another overcoat and a pair of heavy stockings had belonged to Malmgren. Finally he had on Mariano's outer clothing and his stockings, in all three pairs of stockings and a pair of sealskin boots.

When the *Krassin* neared them, Zappi shouted in a tremendous voice, "Stop!"

A low rampart ran along one side of the ice pan, giving a pitiful bit of shelter from the wind. Here lay Mariano, dressed in a shirt and a pair of short knee breeches, both very wet. His feet, lying on the ice, were without any protection or

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covering whatever. The temperature was very slightly above freezing.

In a slight hollow in the middle of the pan were a wet woolen cloth and a pair of trousers, the trap for gulls, already described.

Chpanov's despatch as it appeared after being censored by the Soviet Government: "One of the two rescued men, Zappi, ran toward the ship so rapidly that no one had time to run to him and help him across the planks joining the ice cakes. When he reached the ship's side, without any assistance he climbed rapidly up the rope ladder, a difficult job.

"On another cake, beyond the one carrying Mariano and Zappi, we found a pair of trousers stretched out on the ice.

"On the question of clothing, that worn by Zappi is rather interesting. In addition to the ordinary summer clothing worn by all the men of the *Italia*, Zappi, when we found him, was wearing a pair of winter trousers and two complete sets of winter underwear. On his feet were two pairs of heavy stockings, a pair of leather

THE RECORD OF AN OPEN HEARING

moccasins, and an outer wrapping made of pieces of cloth.

“On the other hand, Mariano was in such condition, according to the ship’s doctor, that he could not have lived another twenty-four hours, if help had not come. He had on only ordinary summer clothing and his trousers were entirely torn away below the knees. His legs were bare. On his feet were shreds of shoes. One of his feet was so badly frozen that it had to be amputated.”

The Soviet Government was interested in maintaining a friendly attitude toward Rome, but even its official version of the rescue shows a sufficiently bad situation.

As I have already said, I can prove from the testimony of competent witnesses that Zappi was wearing Malmgren’s and Mariano’s clothing as well as his own.

Had Zappi denied this, I would have printed his statement, but there is nothing he can say on the subject. Five men saw him climb with agility up the rope ladder of the *Krassin*, dressed in three outfits. They also saw Mariano, half naked car-

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ried from the ice pack on a stretcher. And there is still more to be said.

On a pan, which had drifted off a little from their own cake, Zappi had placed letters cut from a canvas tent. They formed three English words: "PLEASE HELP FOOD." When Tchoukhnovsky circled over them on July 10, but could drop no food because of the small size of the pan, Zappi had placed this sign on the ice.

Zappi knew that the plane could not land on the rough, broken ice and he did not think that a boat could force her way to him. His one thought had been to eat, to keep alive.

As the Russians approached him, Zappi first gave a fervent prayer of thanks to Heaven and then falling on his knees before Philippov threw his arms around the latter's legs in an ecstatic embrace. Mariano did not move. He watched.

Zappi knew just enough Russian to get along. As he reached the side of the ship, he read her name on the bow and shouted, "Hurrah, *Krassin!*"

At the foot of the rope ladder he shook him-

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self free of the men trying to help him and climbed up with the agility of a monkey. Those who knew how difficult a feat is the climbing of a rope ladder stood around amazed. On deck he insisted on walking without assistance. It was impossible for those who saw him to believe that he had not eaten in thirteen days, as he insisted later.

"He was sound all through," Vaganov, one of the first to reach him, told me. "A strong animal," another remarked.

Mariano was unable to move at all. He did not even shiver. He was paralyzed with the cold. Only his mouth and his eyes gave any sign that he was alive. His mouth was half open, set in the frozen smile of a happy child. His eyes were filled with deep thanks. When he was placed on a stretcher, he still seemed lifeless. Being carried to the ship, the same icy, childish smile was frozen on his face. "We carried him as though he were some precious freight." The stretcher was slung from a block and tackle and slowly hoisted to the deck.

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"Half way over the side, as the stretcher swung a little, a breath of hot air from one of the funnels or the ventilators blew on him. It seemed to revive him. He raised his hands weakly in a faint motion of thanks at this first touch of warmth. It was the first movement he had made."

The words of another witness: "His hands were deathlike as though they were covered with white bark, but his feet were a dull black, almost the color made by an indelible pencil." Every one mentioned his terrible smile, "How he smiled, the poor devil. It's impossible to describe or imagine. You would have to have seen it."

He was carried straight to the sick bay, two adjoining cabins with six bunks.

Zappi walked to the dining saloon. He sat down in an armchair, his legs stretched in front of him. He was yellow, his face black with a huge beard, his fingers clenched on the arm of his chair. He leaned back.

"Ah! Ah! Ah!"

He did not talk, he bellowed. His eyes sparkled

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in the light. He looked at no one. Suddenly he shouted:

"Mangiare! Let me eat!"

He moved suddenly. He put the whole of his right hand deep into his mouth, almost to the throat. His teeth glistened with a bright whiteness. Again he bellowed his senseless noises.

The doctor ordered coffee, a long process as none was served on board and the green beans had to be roasted. Zappi became impatient and then angry.

"Mangiare! Mangiare!" he shouted, again shoving his hand deep into his mouth. Still he seemed to see no one around him.

Suddenly he straightened up in his chair, leaned forward and, pounding with his fist on the table, demanded paper, pens and ink. He was given them.

In a firm clear hand he began to write. Without hesitation, in absolutely correct military form, he set down his report of the rescue to be sent by radio to General Nobile. Finished, he tore the sheet from the pad, threw it down on the

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table and leaned back again in his chair. Then with another sudden straightening he shouted:

“Food! I want to eat!”

Eventually a cup of coffee and some crackers were brought him. The doctor attempted to restrain him, but Zappi was too quick. He grabbed three or four crackers at once, crammed them into his mouth, chewed and swallowed them almost instantly. The crackers were taken beyond his reach. Furious, he tried to get out of his chair and grab them.

Chpanov's despatch, already censored: “Here is what Zappi told us of his hardships. Zappi, Mariano and Malmgren had left Nobile's camp in the hope of reaching North Cape. After two weeks Malmgren was unable to go any further. He had broken his arm in the fall of the dirigible and had frozen his feet in the course of the march. He advised Zappi and Mariano to abandon him and push on for themselves. He gave them what remained of his supplies, some of his warm clothing, and his compass, asking them to take that as a memento to his mother. Then at his request

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they hollowed out a grave for him in the ice and left him. Twenty-four hours later when they had made only about a thousand feet across the ice, they saw Malmgren again. He was sitting up in his grave of ice. Several miles further on the two Italian officers found a floating pan, climbed onto it and had been there for eleven days when they were rescued. According to Zappi neither he nor Mariano had eaten anything for thirteen days before they were picked up.

“Mariano would tell me nothing. He was terribly weak and it was only from men of Viglieri’s party, whom we picked up later, that some of the facts about Malmgren’s party came to light.

“Professor Behounek of the Radiological Institute of Prague described the departure of Malmgren’s party. After the hope of establishing wireless communication with the world had almost disappeared, Captains Zappi and Mariano suggested that they leave the party and head for North Cape or Northeast Land. Biaggi, the wireless operator, and the Swedish scientist, Malmgren, volunteered to join them. Malmgren,

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who was the only man in the expedition at all familiar with arctic conditions, insisted, however, that Biaggi stay with the main group.

"The evening before their departure, Malmgren, alone and armed only with a revolver, killed a polar bear. The meat was left with the main party. On May 30 the three set out planning to take between thirteen and seventeen days in reaching the Cape. Here they hoped to find fishing craft.

"When they set out, Malmgren was suffering somewhat from his broken arm. Zappi, who had suggested the trip, was the most vigorous of the three and seemed in excellent condition. Professor Behounek, a close personal friend of Malmgren, gave the latter two letters to take out. In them he expressed the belief that the main party could hold out for another thirty days. Zappi said that Malmgren had not given him these two letters nor several other papers which he was known to have had.

"Captain Viglieri told me that Zappi's statement that he and Mariano had not eaten for the

THE RECORD OF AN OPEN HEARING

last thirteen days of their march was astonishing. The party, he said, had left with food for forty-five days at the rate of 300 grams a man every day. If at the end of two weeks they received what was left of Malmgren's supplies, they should have been amply provided for. Viglieri believed that either they must have lost a good part of their food or that, unfamiliar with arctic conditions and not foreseeing what to expect, they had consumed their supplies far faster than they planned. Unfortunately Mariano's weakness and Zappi's extreme nervousness prevented me from getting information from either on this point."

Now Chpanov's despatch quoted is the third of Zappi's three accounts of his trip. On Zappi's two preceding versions there is ample testimony. A little inquiry and comparison will show how absurd, if nothing worse, is the third account. In the third account, also, there is only the word of *one* of the two men. The other said nothing, and still has said *nothing*.

XI

THE RECORD CONTINUED

ON the menu of a restaurant in Barcelona frequented by Scandinavians there appeared a few months ago the item, *Beefsteak Malmgren*.

This was vouched for by a Swede recently returned from Spain. I record it not as an example of the utter lack of decency or respect on the part of a petty business man, but as a sample of that suspicion coupled with a kind of nausea which swept over Europe and was most keenly felt in the Scandinavian countries.

The suspicion and horror opened, and still keeps open, a grim question. Has one of the worst crimes against the moral code of civilized man been committed? Was it committed by those very men supposed to represent one of the loftiest purposes of civilization: the search for knowledge?

THE RECORD CONTINUED

On July 10 the aviator reported to the *Krassin* that he had seen three men on the ice. This probable mistake has been cleared up, but on July 12 when the *Krassin* found Mariano and Zappi it was believed there were still three men. Naturally they asked:

"The third man? Where is Malmgren?"

Mariano did not move. Zappi did not speak. He pointed to the edge of the ice pan, indicating with his hand the bottom of the ocean. That was his first account.

Just as the Russians reached him, Zappi started to throw some clothing over Mariano. It was too late, however, the rescuers had already reached him and seen Mariano's condition.

Since Zappi's act can only be taken as an attempt to hide from his rescuers the condition in which he had left Mariano, the question remains why he had not done this on July 10 when the two were sighted by the plane? But Zappi, as we have seen, did not think that he could be rescued. He knew that the plane could not land near him and did not imagine that he was within reach of

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a ship. All he was hoping for was food: his sign in cloth letters on the ice, PLEASE HELP FOOD, proves this.

Zappi gave three accounts of the disappearance of Malmgren. The first that Malmgren was under the ice pack, drowned. The second, on board ship, that Malmgren a month back had stayed near Broch Island to the southeastward while he and Mariano pushed on. He was exhausted, Zappi said, and urged them to go on westward without him.

The third account was only an elaboration of the second. Malmgren had them cut a grave for him in the pack, and then had given his clothes to the Italians and urged them to go on. He lay down in his grave. Later, because they had only gone a little distance, he climbed out again and urged them to continue on their way.

This is the last version recently come out of Italy, where Zappi has had time to think it over calmly, or else to be properly taught what to say to explain the disappearance and "sacrifice" of Malmgren.

THE RECORD CONTINUED

As a matter of fact, was Malmgren utterly exhausted? In the fall of the *Italia* he was injured, receiving, it seems, a broken arm and an injured chest. But in spite of this, he took command of a party which went to get relief.

More than this, although injured and in pain, on the night before his departure with Zappi and Mariano he had faced a polar bear alone. He had saved from the wreck a Colt revolver and just one cartridge. With no other arm than the revolver with the one cartridge he killed the bear, shooting him in the head. The flesh fed Nobile's men for many days.

This exploit was an exceedingly dangerous one, for an injured bear does not forgive his assailant and Malmgren had but one try at the animal. There was nothing the matter with his courage and nerve for all his broken arm.

And this is the man, according to Zappi, who undressed himself, had a grave cut for him, lay down in it, gave his watch and compass to Zappi to carry to Sweden and ordered his comrades to leave him to die slowly, alone, on the ice. (A

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curious coincidence on the question of watches: on his wrist when he was rescued, Zappi had his own watch, Malmgren's, and that of the still living Mariano.)

After Zappi gave his second account, Samoilovitch announced that he would proceed at once to Broch Island. Zappi replied that it wasn't worth the trouble.

Zappi recounted that Malmgren took off almost all his clothing, but Zappi knew nothing of the two letters Malmgren was carrying for Professor Behounek. Malmgren then must have kept the letters, and dressed in undershirt and drawers, still with his two letters, lain down in a hollow of the ice, waved good-bye to the two who slowly, reluctantly, drew away across the ice, now and then turning back, hesitant, Zappi wearing Malmgren's clothes. It is a deeply touching scene, imagine it; but perhaps just a little too miraculous.

There is something a little too perfect, astonishingly so, in these stories of free, unasked, spontaneous sacrifice three times related on this No-

THE RECORD CONTINUED

bile flight; strangely enough, told always by the men who received the benefit of the sacrifice.

General Nobile, the commander of the *Italia*, only consented to be taken back by the Swedish aviator Lundborg on the repeated insistence of his men, because once in safety he could direct the rescue, and because Lundborg promised to come back later for the others. The vessel is shipwrecked and the crew force the captain to go first to safety!

Malmgren gave his clothes to the others and begged them to leave him. The testimony of Malmgren on this point would be valuable. It might be expected that at the moment of separation, Malmgren might have scribbled a few words on a scrap of paper. Such a thing would have a reassuring effect now. And what shall we say of the two letters of Professor Behounek, so strangely forgotten by Malmgren?

Leaving Malmgren we have the same scene between Mariano and Zappi. Mariano, imitating Malmgren, undresses (at least he was found undressed), lies down on the ice, heroically happy

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to die knowing that Zappi will survive, that Zappi will carry on. Unfortunately for the picture, however, knowing also that Zappi will eat him.

For on the drifting pan Mariano had said, "*When I die you can eat me, but not before.*"

Aboard the *Krassin* and once more able to talk, Mariano repeated this sentence in the presence of witnesses including the doctor. Furthermore, Zappi, again in the presence of witnesses, admitted that Mariano had spoken this sentence to him.

For a long time Mariano said nothing, smiling, happy to be warm despite his blue feet and his hands, cracked by the cold and covered with white scales. Finally, when he began to talk, came that sentence, "When I die you can eat me, but not before."

When the two men were picked up, they had with them not a thing which could serve as food. They had started with pemmican, chocolate and several other foods, but they had consumed them in less than the month on which they had orig-

THE RECORD CONTINUED

inally figured. (Probably they had not considered the greater need of food to resist the low temperature.) They had gnawed the parts of their shoes which they had left.

When Tchoukhnovsky passed over them and then flew away without dropping anything, Zappi thought that he had not brought any supplies with him, but would come back with some. How long would this take?

“At first we tried to estimate about how far it was to his base by counting the time it took him,” Zappi said. “Faced with the possibility of rescue, hunger seemed worse than ever. But night came on and then the long day. It was then that Mariano said to eat him when he was dead.” (It is worth remembering that Mariano had few clothes and was dying of the cold.) “Often on that last night we fell into periods of entire absence of mind. But we were afraid of going to sleep for fear of dying and we struggled to keep awake. Finally the next morning the noise of your ship. I jumped up and waved pieces of cloth.”

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How long had it been since they had eaten? The time was not the same for the two men. The ship's doctor investigated this question and his report throws still more light on all this confusion.

Zappi said, "We have not eaten for thirteen days." For this reason everyone was astonished to see him walk without assistance, and likewise without assistance, clamber up the rope ladder to the deck about eighteen feet above the surface of the ice.

Physically he appeared in good health, although he was excited and jumpy. His nervous reactions were those of a man still strong, whose muscles had not become flabby. In the armchair in the dining saloon he showed his hunger violently, almost like a beast. But he was not clouded mentally. He was perfectly conscious of what he was doing. No one suggested that he write a message to Nobile, it was his own idea, executed in his own handwriting with perfect clarity and in a steady hand. He showed no suffering from the cold. On the other hand Mariano

THE RECORD CONTINUED

had scarcely the strength left to breathe. He was frozen and dying.

The doctor studied the two men and decided upon a different treatment for each. Mariano, frozen, had to be washed with alcohol; a bath of warm water would have been dangerous. Zappi took a warm bath and emerged feeling extremely comfortable. Only then was he taken to the sick bay, where Mariano had been placed at once.

The doctor explained to both men that neither could eat until he had received an enema. Mariano made no objection. Zappi protested and insisted on eating, but eventually gave in. The results of these enemas, made with oil, were entirely different.

The contents of Zappi's intestines were found to be entirely normal, an indication of comparatively recent digestion. Mariano had to undergo three treatments. The fecal matter was found to be of the consistency of stone, indicating absolute starvation. Zappi had been eating long after Mariano had stopped. According to the doctor, Zappi must have eaten within five or six days

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of his rescue at the longest. Mariano had been dying of starvation for many days before that. (Because of lack of equipment on board the *Krassin*, it was unfortunately impossible to make a chemical analysis of the fecal matter of the two men.)

After this treatment the doctor allowed Mariano only a liquid diet, while Zappi was given slightly more substantial food. Zappi protested; he wanted more to eat. The next morning, the thirteenth, he insisted so violently and seemed so healthy, that he was allowed to eat the ordinary food served to the ship's company, bread, salt meat, rice and some preserves. He ate everything with no ill after-effect.

It became evident to everyone that Zappi had not been starving for thirteen days. He then gave another account: it had been six days since he had eaten.

Two or three days after being rescued, as Chtchoukine, his nurse, was bringing him as dessert the preserve which everyone aboard used, since there was no other, he sat up in his bunk,

THE RECORD CONTINUED

leaped out and went after Chtchoukine with his fists.

On another occasion Chtchoukine addressed him as comrade, since that was the universal custom aboard ship. Zappi turned angrily and shouted, "Don't you call me comrade. For you, you're to call me Monsieur!"

During these days Mariano lay in his bunk, still very weak, perfectly gentle, a little cranky sometimes as sick people are. He loathed seeing Zappi; the latter horrified him. Nonetheless, at times when Mariano became unbalanced and excited, Zappi would order him about gruffly and Mariano never failed to obey with the submissiveness of a child.

"No will power, but a good fellow, a little too soulful, Mariano," was the description given me by one of the men who had had most to do with him on shipboard and whose own powers of judgment I had learned to respect greatly.

"But why didn't Mariano complain of the terrible treatment he had received of Zappi on the ice pack?" I asked.

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"A silly question! Mariano was a weakling," he answered. "And more, he felt that he was an accomplice in something where Zappi had been the moving spirit."

I refused to be turned aside and pressed my questions even to the point of brutality:

"How did Malmgren die? Did Mariano get some benefit from Malmgren's death, whatever that benefit might have been, although he was entirely passive in anything that occurred?"

No answer.

"It seems strange that Mariano won't say anything."

No answer.

"He has every reason in the world to complain of the way Zappi treated him. Why doesn't he?"

No answer.

I turned to the doctor. "Why doesn't Mariano complain of the way Zappi treated him?"

Dr. Srednevsky, without meaning to do so, confirmed what I had been thinking.

THE RECORD CONTINUED

"Perhaps he can't because he and Zappi have something they did in common."

"I know that you have been instructed to say nothing, but that thought has occurred to me also. Perhaps Mariano was powerless to prevent Malmgren's death, perhaps, even, he tried to prevent it, but afterwards he may have profited from it until later he found himself in danger of the same fate that had overtaken Malmgren. Zappi wore his clothes and he would certainly have died if you had not rescued him."

No answer from the doctor.

"All in all your opinion of Zappi is such that you don't want to give it."

Again no answer.

"Here I am accusing Zappi of monstrous crimes and you won't say anything."

No answer.

"Now see here, when such accusations are not true, a man protests violently, denies them. But here you won't say anything at all."

I asked other men of the expedition, mechanics, the nurse, the correspondents, the stokers,

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what they knew or thought of the case. From each the same: an opinion no man would express.

"A force, a somber diabolic force," came from one stoker.

Vorontsova, the correspondent, showed me a little notebook containing expressions of thanks from the men of both parties rescued by the *Krassin*.

Mariano's was there, "In great thanks and in memory of my return to life."

"And Zappi?" I asked, "his name isn't here."

She shuddered instinctively, "Oh, no, not that man!"

Zappi after his rescue was always nervous, jumpy.

Gangrene developed on Mariano's leg; his life was endangered and the doctor advised immediate amputation. Zappi, suddenly interested in the welfare of Mariano, objected strongly.

XII

THE RECORD CONCLUDED

ZAPPI was wearing Mariano's clothing while Mariano lay dying almost naked on the ice. The doctor's examination showed conclusively that Zappi had been eating almost normally long after Mariano had ceased eating anything at all. Mariano felt he was dying. But Mariano dreaded something more than dying and being eaten. What else can we conclude from the last part of that grim sentence, "When I die you can eat me, *but not before*"?

We can conclude the things that Mariano expected to happen to him, and other things that he dreaded might happen to him. We also know how Zappi had treated Mariano up to the point where the rescuers arrived and Zappi hastily threw some clothes over his companion.

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From other evidence, also, we can reach conclusions about Malmgren's fate. First of all because his disappearance is strange in itself. Secondly because Zappi's account contains contradictory and incredible elements. Thirdly because to this day Mariano has never said a word in explanation of the death of the Swedish scientist. Everything on the subject has come from Zappi alone.

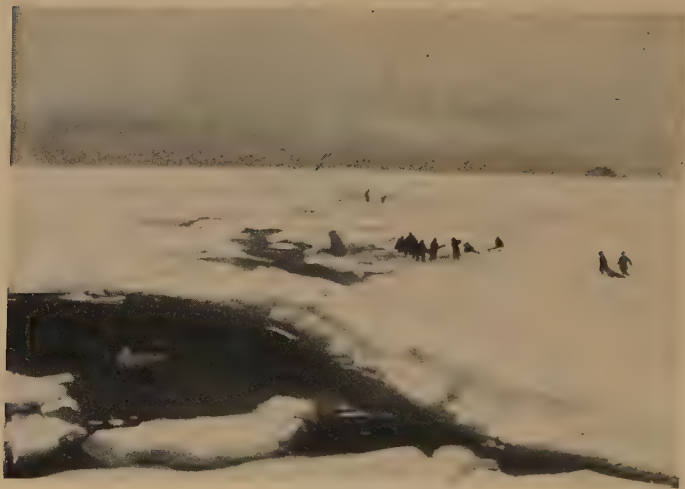
If the death of Malmgren had been by a natural cause, including his own will, the two witnesses of the death would both have spoken and both have given the same account. One man alone tells us a story and he gives three different versions.

If Malmgren had died by accident, a slip and fall under the ice, it would have been simple to say so, but such an explanation cannot be given because Zappi was wearing Malmgren's clothes.

If Malmgren had died of exhaustion and his companions had divided his clothing, there would be an account, but when the two Italians were picked up, Mariano was dying almost naked and



North of The Seven Islands.
Ten feet of the thickness of the ice is under the surface of the water.



The rescue of Zappi and Mariano.



Mariano swung over the side on a stretcher.

THE RECORD CONCLUDED

Zappi was warmly dressed in the three costumes, one that of a living man.

He was forced to explain. He told a story. He corrected. He enlarged. He added more continually. His explanations became each time more detailed, and at the same time stranger and more unbelievable.

Why did not Mariano have anything to say about Malmgren's death? He said nothing. Yet at the same time he did not contradict what Zappi said.

And how could Mariano have got the idea that Zappi could become a cannibal? How could it have entered his mind to say, "When I am dead, *but not before*"? These men were brother officers; they must each have had, and each assumed in the other, a sense of honor. What possible precedent could have occurred to permit Mariano to think his companion capable of such a crime? What precedent could have made him think it so vividly that he said it, not once, but twice?

What light on Malmgren's death do Mariano's experiences cast? And what became of Malm-

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gren's corpse after his death? Surely it should have been found on the ice pack.

I have no wish that Zappi should cease explaining. If he does offer further details I shall print them. But I would like to have heard the account of Mariano, who knew what happened, and who himself was a victim of Zappi's cruelty.

Did Professor Behounek, who was saved on July 12, attempt to discover what became of the two letters which he gave to Malmgren to take to Czecho-Slovakia, the two letters of whose existence Zappi was ignorant?

As this is written, I have learned from Rome that Mariano, who was convalescing when he returned to Italy, has just died of a recurrence of gangrene. This was six weeks after the amputation took place, an amputation which, it was thought, had removed the gangrene successfully. As for Zappi, he has been sent on a government mission to Japan.

I cannot close this record without a few lines about the scientist whose strange loss was felt so keenly in Sweden and throughout all the

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Scandinavian countries. And to continue that habit of lifting the work of others, a habit of which this book is such an example, I give an article on him appearing in *l'Humanité*.

“By the death of Dr. Finn Malmgren, so tragically lost in the arctic, the world of science has lost one of its most brilliant meteorologists. While investigation of this horrible mystery goes on, the career of this young scholar of thirty-two, one of the leading scientists of Sweden, should not be forgotten.

“For ten years Malmgren specialized in the study of meteorology and began his work as an explorer in 1922 with Amundsen on the *Maud*, the famous drifting expedition which lasted for three years. On his return in 1925 Malmgren published an important study on the frost and humidity in the polar air, the result of his observations while on the *Maud*.

“In 1926 Malmgren joined Amundsen as part of the company of the *Norge*, still as a specialist in meteorology. When he was asked to join the *Italia* expedition he hesitated at first, perhaps

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because Amundsen, whose disagreement with Nobile was well known in scientific circles in Scandinavia, had refused to go. Amundsen himself urged his friend not to let such personal matters stand in the way of scientific work.

"Amundsen and Malmgren both were able to put the aims of science above personal considerations. But the Nobile expedition has cost Norway and Sweden the lives of two of their greatest men of science."

Some newspapers have attempted to whitewash the Malmgren incident by publishing a letter from Mme. Malmgren, the mother of the lost scientist. I reproduce the letter in question from *la Liberté* of September 8, 1928.

"My dear General Nobile,

"I have many expressions of thanks to send you with regard to the *Italia* expedition.

"Above all, I was profoundly moved when you were so kind as to fly over my home at Appelviken on your trip to Svalbard. I shall never forget that day and I shall always keep as a dear

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memory the message which you dropped to me.

"I am sorry that I was unable to meet you on your return trip to thank you personally for all that you did for my son. On many occasions you have spoken of him with the greatest praise, and that has been a great consolation to me.

"My son had for you the greatest respect and esteem and his friendship for you was profound and sincere.

"For myself, I believe it is my duty to tell you, and to announce publicly, my absolute conviction that the mutual friendship which united you and my son never suffered any change, even when he left on the expedition which was to prove fatal to him.

"Equally I wish to thank you for the telegram and the beautiful flowers which you so kindly sent me on July 28 when Captain Zappi came to visit me.

"It was a great satisfaction and comfort for me to hear him speak of my son, and you have no doubt heard already from Captain Zappi himself that I place entire faith in the story which

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he told me. He and Captain Mariano, whom I shall have the pleasure of meeting soon, certainly did all that could possibly be done for my son, and I shall remember them always as men of honor.

“My dear General Nobile, it is not for me to speak of public opinion, nor of any other of these things, but I hope to give you the assurance of a friendship for you and a sympathy which is not limited and which will always remain the same.

“Affectionately yours,

“ANNA MALMGREN.”

In answer to the publication of this letter, which appeared a few days after I had published several grave charges against Zappi, I wrote on September 9 the following:

“I have decided to avoid all sterile controversy and stick only to the facts.

“The letter from Mme. Malmgren, admitting that it is authentic—which I hope—is not an argument in the case. First of all it is noteworthy that the letter is not dated, and those interested

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in publishing this letter are aware that it is exceedingly annoying for them not to be able to give the correct date.

“This letter could have been some sort of testimony at the beginning of the newspaper campaign against Nobile and his officers in the Scandinavian countries. At that time suspicions were only suspicions and the investigation of the affair had not been completed.

“Nevertheless let us suppose that Mme. Malmgren wished to reply to my articles, that she had the time to receive them, read them, send her reply to General Nobile, who then was kind enough to make a copy of it for the press. Suppose all that. What does it prove? That Mme. Malmgren has the highest esteem and deepest friendship for General Nobile; that she has entire faith in Captain Zappi’s account and that she considers that he and Mariano are men of honor.

“I bow before the sorrow of Mme. Malmgren, but I am forced to say that, in shaking hands with Captain Zappi, she shook hands with a man

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who had nearly left Mariano to die and who is suspected of knowing more than he says about Professor Malmgren's death. I am accused of not hesitating to torture a woman. This method of intimidation is often used against anyone trying to find the truth.

"In any case, none of this is the question at issue. Neither attestations of unimpeachable morality, sincere but arguable, nor letters will destroy the facts and evidence, uncontested and uncontestable, which I have given. Such a method will never demolish my case. Besides, if the matter comes to offering character witnesses on each side, shall I be forced to quote what Amundsen, just before his death, wrote of Nobile? That would be terrible counter testimony.

"As matters now stand, there are only two men who have a right to speak on this question. They have both a right and a duty. They are Mariano and Zappi. Anything else is an effort to befog the issue in regulation newspaper style. And I think that Mme. Malmgren, if she reads this, will agree."

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The newspapers to which this article was addressed made no reply. They had nothing to say. They knew that Mme. Malmgren's letter had nothing to do with what I had published. They learned further, and this I can prove, that my articles reached everyone who had any interest in the case, even in the Scandinavian countries. They had no facts left to put up against facts.

As for abuse which I have received from Italian papers or individuals, I still refuse to depart from my rule to engage in no controversy off the subject.

XIII

MORE RESCUES

LEHMAN's journal continuing after the rescue of Zappi and Mariano: "We steamed on our way again. There still lay ahead of us fourteen miles to Nobile's party. The ice became thinner and more scattered and from time to time we encountered bergs in every possible shape. About seven o'clock we were sure we had proceeded so far that they could hear our whistle.

"Steaming on slowly we took soundings every half hour to prevent our striking on a submerged rock. The depth in this region is extremely variable. Sometimes the depth is as great as eighty fathoms and sometimes as little as seventeen or fifteen.

"To starboard we could see the high coast of Cape Leigh Smith (the easternmost promontory on Northeast Land) and ahead of us a half oval

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island, Great Island. We were therefore nearing the place where Nobile's party should be on the floating ice, according to a radio we had received from Nobile's base, the *City of Milan*, with which we kept in continuous contact by wireless. But in spite of the careful observation of everyone in the ship, both with the naked eye and with glasses, we could see nothing.

"The *City of Milan*, which was in contact with Viglieri's party, asked them if they could see our ship. The party replied that they could not. This proved that we still were quite a distance from them, but because they were unable to take any bearings they couldn't tell where they were. We continued looking for them unsuccessfully for a long time.

"Suddenly on a high rock on the coast about twelve miles away we made out men making desperate signals to us. We concluded that they were the men from the *Braganza* who had followed the shore with their dogs and sledges in the hope of finding Nobile's party (Viglieri's). We hoisted signal flags telling them that we

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had seen them, but that before coming to pick them up, we were going to search further along on the ice pack."

This decision was reached because it was thought that the men on the shore were the Sora-Van Dongen rescue party and the *Krassin* wished first to rescue Viglieri's men, who had been exposed on the ice for a far longer time and were in greater danger.

"Suddenly about five or six o'clock (Lehman has already said the men ashore were sighted at seven) we were told by wireless from the *City of Milan* that Nobile's men (Viglieri's) could see the *Krassin* about ten miles to the southwest. On this we turned back and steamed to the northeast. We proceeded for quite a while studying the ice with great care but seeing nothing, although the sky was overcast and the visibility excellent.

"Suddenly to port a huge cloud of black smoke appeared. The men were firing off smoke bombs to attract our attention. With a good glass we were then able to make out Lundborg's airplane. On his first flight Lundborg had landed without

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damage and carried back Nobile, but when he came back a second time, he crashed in attempting to come down, smashed his fusilage and landed on the ice with both wings broken.

"About ten o'clock in the evening we reached an ice field. Five men shouting and waving their arms came running toward us. Three ran directly up to the side of our ship. A fourth hobbled along on one foot with the aid of wooden shovels. He had broken his leg in the *Italia's* fall and the shovels, shaped very much like oars, took the place of crutches.

"All the others were uninjured and seemed even to have grown fat. But they all had long hair and beards and were very dirty. They looked like monkeys.

"We lowered our ladder at once and Professor Samoilovitch, Comrade Oras and Ivanov, the secretary, climbed down. They grabbed the hands of the rescued men and kissed each three times on the mouth.

"By then most of the ship's company had reached the ice, including the stokers and oilers,

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all very dirty, having just come from their watch. They tried to be very friendly with the Italians but no one could understand the other. All the Italians could do was shout, '*Ouroussa ko-rocho!*' " (Pidgin-Russian for "Good, the Russians.")

"For the man with a broken leg, a stretcher was brought, but he refused the honor and hobbled to the ladder and climbed up, holding to the rails. Just at the top I had to help him up the last rung. He was very tall and fat with long hair and a heavy beard. He was Ceccioni, the chief mechanic aboard the Zeppelin, an expert on motors who had been on the arctic flight of the *Norge* in 1926 and who had been in Russia at Leningrad and Gatchina.

"According to the accounts of the rescued men, they had reached the pole and sailed back and forth near in the vicinity for about four hours. On the voyage back they were sailing at a speed of a little more than forty miles an hour and maintaining an altitude of about 1,200 feet, when they suddenly ran into a snow storm. The gas

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bag of the dirigible was soon covered with a thick crust of ice, weighting it down so greatly that the ship began to fall to the ice. The motors were stopped, but in a few minutes the ship was dragging on the points of the ice blocks. In this way the commander's gondola was torn off and dropped. The ship, lightened by this, immediately rose clear of the ice and drifted off. The men on the ice soon observed a huge smoke cloud through the snow in the direction in which the ship had been carried, and supposed that in falling the gas had exploded and that all the other men had been burned to death.

"In the gondola were Nobile, the commander, his nine companions, a Czech professor from the city of Prague and a well known Swedish scientist, Malmgrem (*sic*).

"As the gondola fell, one of the men jumped and was crushed. Malmgrem in falling broke his left arm, and the mechanician Ceccioni broke his right leg at the knee. The others were unhurt. The accident occurred at 11.30 A.M. May 25, 1928.

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"All the arms and supplies of the party had been carried away in the ship except for a Colt revolver which Malmgrem had with him. Later he killed a bear with it. The meat fed the party until they had established radio communication with the world. Then the Swedish aviator Lundborg dropped supplies to them.

"They heard concerts over the radio from Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam, and a Russian amateur first heard their signals, mistakenly placing them on Franz Josef Land instead of Cape Leigh Smith."

Lehman gives essential confirmation to the account of Professor Behounek given immediately after he was rescued and before he had any reason to guard what he said.

On May 25, according to Professor Behounek, when the *Italia* was returning from the pole, "the wind was contrary and violent. There was a heavy fog and rain which froze as it fell. A crust of ice formed on the bag of the dirigible which grew heavier and heavier. The *Italia's* speed theoretically should have been between 30 and



The *Krassin* moored to the landing field.



The wreck of Lundborg's plane.



Viglieri's camp.



The rescue of Viglieri (center with the beard) and his men.

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40 miles an hour, but as a matter of fact her actual speed ranged between 22 and 25 miles an hour. She had been flying at an altitude of about 1,200 feet, when she made a rapid fall to 600 feet."

Every one had that instantaneous horrible certainty, which seems to center in the pit of the stomach, that they could not escape disaster. Almost instinctively they hurled overboard whatever came nearest to hand. The dirigible rose slightly, but with no vitality, and soon sank lower than before.

"What was under us we couldn't see at all," Professor Behounek said.

The fog was heavy around them. Still they fell. There was a panic. Nobile ordered two motors stopped, a fortunate move, for at full speed no one would have lived. They were thirty feet above the jagged piled ice blocks.

"While you were falling what did you think?" the correspondent of the *Pravda* of Leningrad asked.

"Only of keeping alive, of avoiding being

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smashed to pieces," was Professor Behounek's reply.

The after gondola crashed against a peak of ice and broke open. Pomella, the mechanician on duty there, was killed. The dirigible, which had been sailing against the wind, swung sidewise dragging along the blocks for thirty feet. The after gondola was smashed to kindling against the ice. Nobile and his dog were thrown out and fell two or three feet into a snowbank, which probably saved their lives.

The cables holding the shattered gondola parted and the lightened dirigible was carried down the wind, the gas escaping. They looked around; how many had escaped? Nobile was unconscious, Pomella killed, Malmgren had a broken left shoulder blade and a bruised side. Several others were injured. Nine living men and a dog alone on the arctic ice.

Half an hour later to the southwest a huge smoke cloud appeared, perhaps ten miles away. The dirigible was destroyed. What hope could there be? The men rummaged through the wreck-

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age of the gondola to salvage what they could. A wireless set. "S O S *Italia*. Nobile fifteen miles from Foyñ Island."

Chpanov's description of the rescue of Viglieri's party: "It took the *Krassin* several hours to grind her way through the cakes to the great ice field upon which the men had made their camp. On the edge of the field stood a tall, heavily bearded man now and then walking up and down with a measured, patient tread. This was the commander, Viglieri himself.

"The other members of the party stayed by themselves, sitting near their tent. Only one man seemed excited. Ceccioni, an enormous mechanician, who hopped up and down for all his broken leg with a pair of oars under his arms serving for crutches. He alone could not control himself because of his experience when Lundborg, the aviator, came back to the party after rescuing Nobile. Lundborg was to have taken Ceccioni next because of his injury, but crashed in making his landing. Filled with a frenzy of tragic despair at seeing his hope of rescue vanish under his

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eyes, Ceccioni had collapsed at the feet of the aviator in a fit of hysteria.

"A few hours after their rescue, the party assembled in the dining saloon, washed and dressed, but still a little awkward in our high Russian boots. Little by little, as they returned to normal life, as their thick beards disappeared, as they realized that their hardships were over, the men lost what they had had in common with one another.

"The crude arctic explorer became the handsome, elegant officer that he was, and found himself no longer able to sleep in the same cabin with a mere mechanician. Slowly as Zappi became again a captain he could not tolerate being addressed as 'comrade' by the sailors and insisted on being called 'Monsieur'.

"When we turned the men over to the *City of Milan*, all the simplicity of unfortunate men bound together in an arctic disaster had vanished. We turned over to the new captain not a group of talkative, bearded men, inclined to feel they had a common cause together and will-

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ing to share their experiences, but silent, offish men, who avoided a frank answer to a question: in short, a group of Fascisti."

The men rescued that day were Viglieri, a lieutenant, Behounek, Troiani, an engineer, and Ceccioni and Biagi. Lundborg had been taken back on July 6 by Lieutenant Schiberd, another Swedish aviator, but his plane was still lying upside down on the ice, a total loss. Parts that were any use were detached and taken away.

The camp was reasonably well supplied. There was a tent, a fireplace, a mast for the radio, and a toilet. Some provisions were still left.

Lundborg has already described the somber life of Viglieri's camp, its worries and disputes, the feverish joys and the hopeless despair of the men lost in the fury of a gale or in the horror of the arctic silence.

Zappi and Mariano were excited when they were told of the rescue of their comrades. They visited with them for a while, but the time was cut short on the insistence of the doctor. That probably was the reason Professor Behounek

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failed to ask for the two letters he had given to Malmgren.

An impenetrable fog settled over the ice. At 10 o'clock the *Krassin* let go her anchor for the night.

XIV

A RETREAT FORCED

THE *Krassin* lay anchored off Cape Leigh Smith, easternmost point of Northeast Land, somewhat to the south of Foyu Island. Three tasks still lay ahead of her: to retrace her steps along the coast and pick up Sora's party, which she had already sighted; to find Tchoukhnovsky and his four companions down somewhere on Seven Islands to the north; and, finally, to push on through the ice far to the eastward toward Franz Josef Land in search of the men from the forward gondola of the *Italia* and the lost *Latham*.

Little worry was felt about Tchoukhnovsky, since contact was still being maintained with him by wireless, but his plane was disabled, and without a plane the *Krassin* was so seriously handicapped in her searches that it was practically use-

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less to continue without one. Under the circumstances it was decided to request General Nobile, aboard the *City of Milan*, to loan the expedition one of his planes.

Samoilovitch and Oras came to this conclusion particularly because the broken propeller and the damaged rudder seriously interfered with the effectiveness of the *Krassin*. They concluded that with a plane, despite their own unsatisfactory condition, they could proceed with their searches, but that without one any further cruising of the *Krassin* would be merely futile.

The *Krassin's* request sent by wireless to the *City of Milan* on July 13 led to an exchange of telegrams. The first answer reached Samoilovitch from Rome:

"July 13. You have accomplished a work which will remain a historic monument among polar expeditions and among acts of generous humanity. I thank you in the name of all Italians and I beg you to thank all your associates for me.

"MUSSOLINI."

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It was not flowery, nor braided with gold as if from d'Annunzio, but it was pleasant, though not quite what was wanted at the moment.

Then later in the day came the real message, also from the Italian Government, announcing that no plane could be loaned to the *Krassin* and requesting that the rescued men be brought as quickly as possible to Ny Aalesund, Kings Bay, where the *City of Milan* lay.

A third telegram arrived in due course, signed by Captain Romagno, commander of the *City of Milan*, ordering the rescued men to maintain absolute silence about all their experiences.

The *Krassin* was now perhaps fifteen or twenty miles from any others who might have escaped from the wreck of the *Italia*, but for lack of the plane denied by the Italian Government, was forced to stop her searches. Various men of the ship's company gave their opinions on this situation.

"It had a very bad effect. We couldn't help wondering why the Italian Government had refused a plane."

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"We couldn't help but think that Nobile was annoyed at our success."

"Nobile had the means to lend us help. It was infuriating to have to stop."

"Well, as for me, I can't help but feel that some people just didn't care about any of the others, because there were only workmen in the other gondola."

The last opinion was not quite correct, because the gondola contained, besides the six workmen, Pontremoli, a distinguished physician. At Stavanger Samoilovitch received a letter from Mme. Pontremoli, his mother, begging him to rescue the doctor, and many pleas in his behalf from universities in all parts of Europe.

Lehman's Journal: "Friday, July 13. The weather has turned foul. The fog is as thick as milk. We can't see a thing about us. We are still in the same place in the pack where we picked up Nobile's party (Viglieri's). We loaded most of their stuff aboard and took down the broken plane and took the parts aboard. The Italians showed us the wreck of the gondola, now

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half buried in the ice. Everything of any value we stowed aboard ship. We have been here yesterday and to-day."

In the afternoon: "A wind has come up raising a sea and the fog is beginning to break up. The sea sloshes over the deck and the ice is being smashed into little pieces and carried into the open water. If we hadn't come yesterday to take them (Zappi and Mariano) off their pan they would certainly have been lost to-day.

"We are now clear of the ice pack and are skirting the shore beyond the islands looking for Captain Sora's men from the *Braganza*. Sora with two Italians (an error, only one) and a Swede had taken sledges and dogs and worked along the shore looking for Malmgren's party.

"But we received a radio saying that a Swedish flyer had found them and taken back two of the men, leaving one man with the dogs, probably because the plane could not take any more."

This is substantially correct. Captain Sora and Van Dongen were saved by a Swedish aviator whose name I have not discovered. (Doubtless it

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could be found in the files of Scandinavian newspapers.) The Norwegian guide, Warming, had stayed with the dogs near Cape Bruun and so had not been picked up.

The *Krassin*, therefore, had nothing left to do but pick up Tchoukhnovsky, since she had not the means to continue searching for the second gondola of the *Italia* nor for Amundsen and the lost *Latham*.

Lehman's Journal: "We are heading for the place where we first stopped and put our plane on the ice. On the plane were Comrade Tchoukhnovsky, Comrade Straube, the wireless operator, the camera man and the mechanic. We have kept in contact with them by wireless and Comrade Tchoukhnovsky told us that he is about a mile from shore in a narrow strait between two islands and that he had been hunting and killed two reindeer."

It is worth observing that fishing proved useless in these regions. The sailors of the *Krassin* tried several times but never caught a fish. Possibly their method was not the right one for these

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waters. The gulls and penguins sighted were good for nothing but being stuffed. Seals and walruses were frequently seen, but men must be pretty well reduced to starvation before they will eat these animals, which are considered of industrial value only.

“Sunday, July 15. The weather is very bad. We are pounding our way through heavy broken ice. The fog is thick. First it rains heavily, and then turns to snow and sometimes hail. Once in a while there are rifts in the storm, and through one of these we saw our plane, but the storm shut it out of sight again and we found it difficult to reach.

“Eventually we found ourselves cornered in the ice, blocked astern so that reversing the engines failed to move us. We had to empty all our tanks forward to lift the bow out of the water and push it over the ice. In this way we attacked the jam and worked our way ahead very slowly. We worked all day and long into the evening, but we haven’t yet reached the plane.”

Rain, snow, hail squalls: one of those sudden

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rises in temperature, causing violent shifting of winds, which Professor Griffith Taylor has described recently in the *Times* as a characteristic phenomenon of polar weather. Now and then Tchoukhnovsky's plane could be seen at no great distance, but what a terrific struggle to reach it!

Lehman, worn from his work, went aft to his bunk for some well earned rest, while the crack of the breaking ice sounded under him like the report of artillery.

"Monday, July 16. We are working ahead slowly. The weather is horrible, a terrific snow-storm. Although Tchoukhnovsky and the plane cannot be more than a mile or two ahead, we can't see them.

"This morning two men offered to proceed ahead on skis to take food and medical supplies to Tchoukhnovsky. One was a wireless operator, a young fellow who spent three years on an arctic expedition, and the other the correspondent of the *Pravda* of the young communists of Moscow. They have left.

"We are waiting for their return somewhat

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worried, although we're not just sitting twiddling our thumbs about it. We are pushing ahead carefully, using the compass. Around us we can see nothing but this white storm burying us under great whirling flakes.

"Suddenly there was a rift in the storm and we caught sight of a party of men ahead of us. In front was a man on skis making better time than the rest, and behind him were two groups, both more or less strung out on the ice. We were astonished, because we could make out ten men, some even thought eleven, while there had been only five on our plane and, with the two who had gone out from the ship in the morning, there would be only seven.

"All sorts of rumors spread about the ship, some insisting that Tchoukhnovsky had found Amundsen's party.

"The man on skis reached the ship first, read the name on the bow and shouted, 'Hurrah, *Kras-sin!*' and threw his hat in the air.

"It proved to be the captain of the *Braganza*, who with three other Italians had left their ship

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to rescue Tchoukhnovsky. They had brought supplies and warm clothing, making a distance of scarcely ten miles in three days. They reached Tchoukhnovsky only a quarter of an hour before the two men from the ship.

“The *Krassin* stopped and we threw them the rope ladder. Then we had a happy meeting with our unexpected guests and our lost comrades. All of them were dirty and had long beards. The correspondent of the *Pravda* brought aboard the horns of one of the reindeer. Everybody shook hands and told all about what had happened and the Italians from Valieri’s party ran up on deck and joined us. The other two, however, were forced by the doctor to stay in the sick bay. It was an interesting meeting in the midst of the ice of the far north.

“In the evening the Norwegian pilot came into our dining saloon for supper. He had been taken along as guide by the Italians, because he lives as a hunter in these regions. I found that he spoke a little German.”

Lehman is always delighted to speak German,

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a language he obviously considers more facile than Russian. He tackled the pilot at once about how a man made out working for a living in the arctic.

The pilot told him that he came from Tromsøe where he had a wife and children, but that he had not been home in six years, because there was considerable unemployment. He lived on the furs he sold, and managed to save a little. The dealers paid him 200 crowns (about \$75) for a polar bearskin and between 350 and 400 crowns (about \$135 to \$150) for a white foxskin.

The *Krassin's* aviators had not suffered at all from their week in the open, except that they forgot to bring any salt with them. Curiously enough the men from the *Braganza* who came to their rescue brought along food and clothing but likewise forgot salt. Tchoukhnovsky set to work to make up for this lack by boiling sea water, and obtained passable results, although the process consumed a good deal of fuel and did not yield a very high grade salt. But this slight hardship was more than made up for by the satis-

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faction the men felt in the success of their companions aboard the ice-breaker. They themselves had to endure gales and blinding snow.

On Monday, July 17, from midnight until seven in the morning, the time was consumed getting the plane aboard. As in landing it on the ice it was necessary to build an inclined plane from the top of the superstructure to the ice. Then came the work of collecting and getting aboard the skins, planks, tools, all the little things cluttering a camp. All was stowed aboard and the men looked a last time at this lonely spot where perhaps men would never come again. This time the arctic had been forced to give up everything that could be taken from it, the living and the dead.

The ice was deep and thickly packed. A freezing wind blew across the *Krassin* from the port. The cakes cracked under the ship as the bow rode up over them.

By afternoon the *Krassin* had rounded Seven Islands and reached the strip of water along the north coast of Spitzbergen where the pack ice

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does not always form. Ahead lay the *Braganza* still locked fast. At the mainmast flew the Norwegian flag and at the foremast the Italian. The *Krassin* ground her way toward the other ship.

It took her half a day of steady ice breaking to reach the *Braganza*, covering in that time a distance which had forced upon the Italians who came to rescue Tchoukhnovsky three days of difficult, dangerous marching.

The *Braganza* was a wooden two-master hailing from Tromsø. She carried an auxiliary engine and a crew of fourteen Norwegians and fifteen Italians. The Russians walked across the ice and boarded her for a visit. At the bow were ten husky dogs, "as black as the mountain bears." They were valuable animals, jealously cared for.

Ioudikhine, a wireless operator from the *Krassin*, who had lived three years in one of the lonely weather stations set up by the Soviet Government on the northern coast of Siberia, told me that there such dogs are branded and registered so that they have almost a civil status in the community.

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"There, life is harsh and monotonous," he told me. "You get terribly sick of it soon. You suffer most from the lack of women, but you wouldn't hesitate a minute to trade five women for one of these dogs of a good breed."

All the material which belonged to the *Braganza* was carried aboard. With her was a young Italian doctor, assistant to the physician who had stayed aboard the *City of Milan*. Dr. Srednevsky asked him to come aboard the *Krassin* and look at Mariano, whose condition had become serious. Gangrene had set in following the freezing and Dr. Srednevsky advised immediate amputation of Mariano's foot.

Zappi protested violently and the young doctor supported him. Dr. Srednevsky still felt convinced of the need of amputation. He consulted Samoilovitch, who advised him to wait forty-eight hours until the *Krassin* reached Kings Bay, where the matter could be decided upon by the Italian commanders. Dr. Srednevsky examined Mariano again and reluctantly gave in.

The *Krassin* took leave of the *Braganza* and

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after some hours of heavy ice breaking, began to grind her way more rapidly through the ice.

About eleven in the evening the cry of "Bears! Bears!" went up. There were two, one on each side of the ship. A volley of shots went off.

One of the animals, apparently slightly wounded, made off over the ice and disappeared in a deep crevasse, while the other, more seriously hurt, was unable to move. A man approached her and fired almost point blank at the head. The bullet passed through the skull and came out at the back. The bear rubbed her head in the snow as though she were trying to shake something off, leaped a few times, and then rolled over dead. The carcass was hoisted aboard. Blumstein with his camera had not missed the hunt.

On July 18 the *Krassin* finally emerged into open water after having navigated through the ice fields since June 30. A heavy sea was running and the vessel began to pitch. As a matter of fact even in calm water she always rolled, not being built for such work. Sometimes her list during a roll would reach twenty-five degrees.

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She headed towards Amsterdam Island over more water notorious for the inaccuracy of its charting. Speed was kept down and Berezkin was out again with his favorite machine, the sounding lead. Those who were drafted to help him had not his love for it, and T., who most often suffered, felt that this was no part of the work for which the *Pravda* had sent him on a long polar expedition.

On the eighteenth Panov, the cook, had an argument with Captain Egghi over skinning the bear. Panov had made the mistake of doing the job on the first bear for ten roubles, and now the captain insisted that he should skin the second for the same price. Panov protested. The job was long, disgusting, tiring, he ought to have fifteen roubles. The ship's company sided with him. "Give him his fifteen roubles, it's worth it."

Everybody who wasn't busy stood around to watch. One of the men took a bit of the bear fat, fastened it to a cord and threw it over on the water. A gull grabbed it and found herself captured. Once in the hand of the "fisherman" she

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bit ferociously, drawing blood wherever her yellow beak closed. They looked at her, a beautiful white bird, patted her, with great care; and set her free again.

As evening drew on, the men amused themselves throwing bits of the bear meat over the side to the gulls. They circled around the ship, a white cloud of beating wings and shrieking beaks.

The next morning the *Krassin* reached Kings Bay.

XV

KINGS BAY

KINGS BAY alone of all Spitzbergen contains anything that could be called a site of human habitation. The port of Ny Aalesund on the Bay is the harbor of easiest access to vessels, and here are a straggling little street of houses, a geophysical observatory, a radio station and the hangar used by the *Italia*. Soon the village will have an electric power plant. It is probably the extreme outpost of industry pushing into the polar regions, for here are the coal mines of Spitzbergen and the town itself is really a coal company village. It is this that makes Kings Bay the natural base of relief expeditions into the north.

The *Krassin*, freed from the ice pack at last, doubled Amsterdam Island and reached Kings Bay on the morning of July 19.

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To her men, after weeks in the arctic solitude, this little settlement seemed magnificent. These lofty mountains capped with white and marked on the lower reaches with long streaks of dark rock were land at last. The little shanties and houses with their windows and fences were life and civilization. The great peaks shut close around the little village locking it between the arms of two huge glaciers, blue white in the sun, "blocks of marble falling forever into the sea," Lehman described them.

Four ships lay at anchor in the harbor, a Norwegian tramp come for a cargo of coal, the two Swedish relief ships commanded by Captain Tornberg, the *Tanja* and the *Hobby*, and Nobile's base ship the *City of Milan*.

As soon as the *Krassin's* anchor was dropped, Samoilovitch and Oras went aboard the *City of Milan* to visit Nobile. The details of their conversation have never been given out. The Italians thanked the expedition and together the men went over plans for further rescue work, but rather vaguely it seems. Nobile seemed ex-

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ceedingly depressed. He said that he had been ordered back to Italy by his government.

Shortly after the Russians had returned to their ship, Captain Romagno and some of his officers came to the *Krassin* to return the visit. Nobile stayed aboard the *City of Milan*. He was reported to be sick.

As the Italians were boarding the *Krassin*, a motor launch containing an American camera man sent from New York and an Italian determined likewise on photographing the *Krassin* came alongside.

Blumstein had been refused permission to take pictures aboard the *City of Milan*, so the officers of the expedition were not disposed to allow the Italian to take photographs aboard the *Krassin*, although they had no objection to allowing the American to photograph what he pleased. Incidentally he, like Blumstein, had been barred from the *City of Milan*.

As the American boarded the *Krassin*, the Italian attempted to follow him, with all his apparatus, a heavy camera and tripod, over his shoulder.

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Trying to scramble hastily up the ladder so as not to be outdone by the American, his foot missed a rung and he plunged head over heels into the harbor, camera and all. He could swim perfectly but dared not let go of his camera, since it would sink at once. So he grabbed his instrument tighter and bobbed up and down helplessly, swallowing great mouthfuls of water.

New York must be a ferocious city. Her representative, laughing heartily, quickly mounted his camera, and proceeded to film the half-drowned Italian.

A sailor soon grabbed the Italian by the seat of his pants and the back of his sweater and started pulling him out. Held as he was, the poor man doubled up like a jack-knife with his head under water. But no difficult position could shake him from his duty. Head under water and all, he kept his grasp on his precious camera and was saved, bag and baggage.

The American never stopped laughing and shouted to the Italian that it was a punishment from his fascist god. The American had his film

THE KRASSIN

and the Italian had not; perhaps that was the cause of his laughter.

Zappi went aboard the *City of Milan* without trouble, walking like his companions. Mariano was taken in a stretcher. What was left of Lundborg's plane was transferred to the Swedish ships, and Viglieri's party returned to their countrymen.

Aboard the *City of Milan* a consultation was held at the bedside of Mariano. The gangrene had spread and his condition was serious. Dr. Srednevsky advised amputation, but the doctor from the *City of Milan* and his young assistant from the *Braganza* did not dare take the responsibility.

Finally they agreed that it should be done, but asked Dr. Srednevsky to do it alone. They added that amputation should be just above the gangrene but Dr. Srednevsky insisted that there was no hope in stopping gangrene except by operating well above the affected portion. The Italians finally consented.

The operation, conducted without anesthetic,

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must have been torture for Mariano, but he bore it without a groan. The leg was severed just below the knee.

On Friday, July 20, part of the *Krassin's* company went ashore, picking their way in a launch through the floating ice cakes in the harbor. The weather was foggy.

The mining village numbered about twenty-five houses. There were a postoffice, a grocery, a little Norwegian bakery and a tiny hospital. As in the rest of Norway, the sale of spirits was illegal, but there was no lack of bootlegging, which provided the village with ample quantities of whatever was desired. Beer, which was legal, sold at sixty oere a bottle. (Twenty-five cents.)

The mine had been operated originally by a syndicate of English, Dutch and Norwegian interests, but the Dutch had sold out when they found that it did not pay very well. The vein began on the surface and descended slowly into the earth.

The first gallery ran on a shallow angle from the surface for about 2,000 feet. Here it reached

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a depth of 600 feet under the surface. The operations yielded about 300 tons a day of a rather low grade coal which seemed to make more smoke than heat, as the Russians discovered. It was valuable to Norway, however, since the country had no other coal mines.

The men earned sixteen crowns (about \$6) for a day of eight hours, but because of the high prices prevailing in the little outpost, this had scarcely the purchasing power of \$2.

The miners, however, managed to save money, for otherwise they would not have come to this desolate place, despite the fact that Norway is unable to furnish work to her population and forces emigration. So drab was the life in Spitzbergen that the miners never stayed more than two or three years. In winter, coming out of the warm mine the men encountered temperatures often as low as 40 degrees below zero. There was nothing about but ice or the cabarets. In spring a little moss appeared and a few wild flowers blossomed in the little valleys. Sometimes wild reindeer were seen.

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The village numbered a population of about 250, forty of them women, most of them ugly, but all with "better manners than those on the Nevsky." They were very proper and stayed in their houses. On the average, six men a year went insane from the strain of the strange manner of life forced upon them.

On the twentieth a German liner loaded with tourists steamed into the harbor for a few hours. The passengers were eager to see the *Krassin*; "*etwas kolossales*," they declared. In the single street of the village the *Krassin's* men were cornered and photographed by men, "too fat to get into carriages" and women and young girls, all "very appetizing," according to Lehman. In a few hours the German ship steamed away without incident.

The next day Tchoukhnovsky announced that he would stay at Kings Bay and repair his plane. He hoped to be able to make several flights to the eastward in search of the men from the lost gondola of the *Italia*.

On the twenty-second the work of getting the

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plane ashore was undertaken. The *Krassin* took up a position across the bow of the *City of Milan* and by joining blocks and tackles from both ships, an impromptu derrick of the firmest sort was contrived to lower the plane to the water without allowing it to sway. The skis had been removed and replaced with floats, so that as soon as it reached the harbor it was towed safely to a little cove. Ashore it was placed in storage until Tchoukhnovsky, Straube, and Fedotov, who were to stay with it, had received some needed parts by ship from Bergen.

The *City of Milan* was getting ready to sail as soon as possible, planning to touch at a port in northern Norway where there was a hospital. Mariano's condition was becoming a cause of anxiety. Before the *Krassin* could sail south for the repairs she needed, she had first to obtain fresh supplies of water and coal.

Several of the men were given shore liberty and set off up the mountains. From five till eleven they tramped, making a distance of nearly ten miles to the foot of a glacier and returning

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with eighteen ducks, sixteen shot by Dr. Srednevsky, two gulls, and a penguin shot by Lehman.

At Ny Aalesund there were two Italian and two Norwegian planes, all four entirely idle. It is possible that the Italian Government in refusing to lend one of these machines to the *Krassin* may have caused the loss of some of its own subjects.

Although completely refueled by the twenty-third, the *Krassin* was unable to move because of a thick fog which made the narrow entrance to the harbor dangerous. A German aviator flew over the *Krassin* and sailed away.

On the twenty-fourth the day held foggy, but towards evening it began to lift and by three the next morning the *Krassin* steamed slowly out of the harbor.

XVI

THE MONTE CERVANTES

THE three engines beat quietly away. On the bridge the captain paces back and forth watching the dark water with its white ice cakes and scattered, protruding rocks. At four o'clock the wireless operator leaps up the companionway to the bridge, waving a yellow telegraph blank.

"S O S *Monte Cervantes*," giving her position, seventy miles to the southwest.

The captain reaches for the engine-room indicators, "Full speed ahead." The wheel is spun over and the *Krassin* is off on her new course, while the radio sends out, "Coming."

Then suddenly something goes wrong with one of the engines. An hour's work. Erchov, the chief engineer, is bathed in sweat. Perhaps it will do now, but the speed must be kept down.

Then another message, "We can stay afloat

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only sixteen hours." Erchov forgets the proper care of his engines, broken propeller and all, and the *Krassin* steams ahead at her best.

At midnight the *Krassin* reached the damaged ship in one of the fjords along the coast, listing heavily to starboard and sinking by the bow from a gash in the forward plates. She was a large two-funneled liner built for the South American passenger service of the Hamburg-American Line. The life boats filled with passengers hung on the davits ready to be lowered.

The *Monte Cervantes* had taken 1,500 tourists from Hamburg to cruise the edge of the ice pack. She had torn her bow on a heavy cake and the captain had put into the fjord to shelter the boats if he sank.

There was no sleep for the crew of either ship that night. The divers from the *Krassin*, Jeloudev and Dmitriev, went over to inspect the damage to the German ship. They found a rent forward nine feet high and nearly eight feet long. Over the gap they stretched a piece of extremely heavy canvas especially prepared to block the flow of

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water, an invention of a Russian, Admiral Makarov. Then over the canvas they fastened a tight layer of planking. Once the job was done, the *Monte Cervantes* should no longer leak beyond the capacity of her pumps, and the *Krassin* felt the rescue was over.

But the next morning it was found that the pumps were not gaining on the water in the hold. A new inspection by the divers disclosed that on the other side of the bow was a second gash, only a few inches high, but more than seven feet long. This, too, was patched and then the pumps began to make headway.

The evening of the twenty-eighth finally found the hold of the *Monte Cervantes* dry and the vessel riding on even keel. The main work was done. In the morning the ballast would have to be shifted to bring the bow out of the water so that men could come alongside on rafts and work on the gashes in the hull.

This is the story given by one of the passengers on the *Mont Cervantes*: "When the *Monte Cervantes* left Hamburg with 1,500 tourists on July

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17, none of them could have guessed into what an adventure he was going.

"The voyage was splendid, passing Bergen, Molde, Tromsøe and North Cape, which we reached July 23. Soon we entered a region of floating ice between North Cape and Bear Island. On the twenty-fourth for the first time we saw the midnight sun. About ten o'clock there appeared a great band of clouds along the northern horizon. Below them, red in the low sun, we could see the glaciers of Spitzbergen."

Soon the ship was thickly surrounded by ice cakes. The tourists were delighted and stayed on deck all night until the *Monte Cervantes* reached clear water.

The captain, however, disliked the situation in which he found his ship and attempted to avoid ice as much as possible. The passengers were thrilled by this new experience and slept, delighted with the sensation of sleeping while their vessel "sailed over rocks."

The next day the *Monte Cervantes* entered Green Harbor above Cape Starostine on the

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western coast of Spitzbergen. "Then it began to be whispered that we had sprung a leak. It was said that we had burst some of the piping. No one knew anything for sure. Without warning one of the sections of the ship was shut off, and wet trunks and dripping beds were hauled out. Men mounted to the upper decks. We heard the squeaks of block and tackle: they were preparing the lifeboats. But the ship still went along at full speed and there was no panic. Everybody concluded that the boats were being put in shape so that the passengers could go ashore, and general elation ruled. No one knew that a message, for all practical purposes an SOS, had already been sent out.

"The ship was now in Bell Sound, a quite uninhabited harbor off Recherche Bay."

From this it would appear that the captain had turned southward, and this brings into question the statement of the passenger that in the morning the ship was in Green Harbor. Perhaps she was merely off the mouth of that fjord.

In Bell Sound the ship stopped and the pas-

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sengers set to work to amuse themselves. Most of them photographed the mountains of Spitzbergen.

“Suddenly at luncheon a great sensation occurred. We learned that the ship was sinking and that an SOS had been sent to the *Krassin*, asking immediate aid. Word from the ice-breaker was still awaited.

“This news was like a bomb to everybody. Would the *Krassin* come, was the universal question? Would we have the pleasure of seeing the *Krassin* close by and of knowing her heroic crew and commander, men who, forgetting politics and party feeling, had thrown themselves into a dangerous adventure out of honor and human sympathy?”

This sentence struck me as remarkable. The *Monte Cervantes* is sinking and one of her passengers wonders if he will have the pleasure of seeing the *Krassin* close by at his own shipwreck.

In the afternoon they learned that the *Krassin* was coming and everyone watched the harbor mouth to get the first view of the ice-breaker.

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Finally a little black point appeared on the horizon. Slowly it grew until the passengers could make out the red flag and the stars on the funnels, and finally the men lining the deck.

"A moment of silence, and then we burst into cheers. With the *Krassin* standing by, no one was afraid any more and, dead tired, we went to bed."

Chpanov's despatch: "About midnight while the sun still shone in the north, the *Krassin* steamed into Bell Sound, from which branches a deep bay, by curious coincidence named Recherche Bay. Here she found the *Monte Cervantes*.

"The giant transatlantic liner was lying near the foot of a glacier, her bow, with a great gash in it, sunk deep in the water. The water line along her starboard beam was plainly visible several feet out of water. The lower holds were filled and the sea continued to pour into the ship. She had rammed a large cake and torn her bows open.

"As the *Krassin* swung alongside the *Monte Cervantes*, more than a thousand of her passengers lined the rails and waved from the filled

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lifeboats. It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm that greeted the *Krassin*; it was a bedlam of cheering, shouting, waving men and women, each trying to shout down his neighbor and get over his message of approval in his own language.

“As a matter of fact, the situation in which the *Monte Cervantes* had found herself was extremely serious and only the arrival of the *Krassin* assured the safety of her passengers. The Russian divers went over the side and inspected the extent of the gash. On board the *Krassin* work was at once begun on a special patch to place over the ripped plates of the German steamer. The passengers described the *Krassin* as the ‘miraculous rescue ship’ and invited the correspondents on board.

“The Italians on the *Monte Cervantes* organized a deputation which visited the *Krassin* to thank the expedition for saving the men of Nobile’s expedition.”

The passengers of the *Monte Cervantes* then set about showing their gratitude. Lehman de-

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scribes what they did: "The passengers decided to send us a gift of 134 quarts of beer, 72 boxes of pineapples, 150 packages of tobacco, 150 cakes of chocolate, and a side of frozen meat. They invited us to visit them and inspect their ship. They ought to live very cheerfully. They had two orchestras, one of stringed and the other of wind instruments, and from eight to twelve every night they held dances. They were very interested in the Russian dances we showed them. Every one tried to feed us beer and wine, and insisted that we write something on postal cards or albums as a souvenir of our rescuing them.

"As soon as they learned that I could speak German, they began to make a lion out of me and I talked so much that I lost my voice. The women gave us lots of presents. They were all well dressed, but all of them, even the girls, were only of moderately well-to-do families and there seemed to be no very rich on the boat. They were mostly teachers with their wives, or women teachers traveling alone. There were some wounded veterans of the imperialist war, a few

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doctors and lots of small merchants and business men. I found a Lett who spoke better Lettish than I do.

“The *Monte Cervantes* was built at Hamburg in 1927 and this was only her fourth voyage. She was a twin screw ship with Diesel engines capable of making fifteen knots. She was a third-class vessel of 14,000 tons, but very comfortable, with two dining saloons, each of which could serve 800 people at once, a saloon filled with little round tables, and a reading room.”

On Monday the thirtieth, after a full day's work on the injured ship, a sudden gale blew up in the evening, stopping the work and threatening to damage the scaffolding and rafts erected about the bow of the *Monte Cervantes*. The *Krassin* found herself dangerously near the big German liner and pulled across the harbor for a good anchorage.

The weather was again calm enough for work on the thirty-first and the finishing touches were put on the patches. The heavy canvas covering the floor of the *Krassin's* engine room was taken

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up and placed over the *Monte Cervantes'* gashes to make a thorough job.

The next day the work was done, but a heavy gale made it unwise for the two boats to proceed on their way. "But the storm didn't seem to bother the pretty young girls aboard the *Monte Cervantes*. They seemed in no hurry to lose our company. We went ashore together in the boats and walked up and down the rocky beach. We gave each other presents and picked the little polar flowers. We happened upon the fossil bones of a whale, enormous things, and took them aboard the *Krassin* for the Museum of Lenin-grad. Then we attended a concert on the *Monte Cervantes* which lasted until midnight. Our young men joined heartily and made a deep and friendly impression on the Germans."

The next day a notice on the ship's bulletin board informed the passengers of the *Monte Cervantes* that they could make use of still another day ashore. They had used their year's savings to come and inspect this frozen land through a telescope, and then risked their lives to do it;

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who could blame them for getting their money's worth in going ashore? They took an orchestra along in one of the boats to cruise up and down along the beach playing for those walking on the shore.

In the evening there was a farewell party aboard the *Krassin*. The beer and hors d'œuvre given by the Germans rounded it out, while aboard the *Monte Cervantes*, Lehman and the other men, who had put in long hours of work since six in the morning on the crippled liner, were given a huge dinner. The *Monte Cervantes* was now entirely repaired. "She could sail to America" was the general opinion. Her ballast was restored; the work was finished.

The *Krassin* got up steam on the third and was ready to leave after nearly ten days with the *Monte Cervantes*. During the day a motor boat arrived, bringing some Russians from Green Harbor to the south of Prince Charles Foreland, engineers, miners and railway men, who lived in that deserted spot, operating a little Russian coal mine.

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Not long after this, Professor Hoel, the Norwegian, who had stayed a few days at Kings Bay, arrived in another small boat and was taken aboard. Then came the leave-taking between the two ships.

"Our whistle is blowing," Lehman wrote, "and our anchor chain is rattling. On the deck the passengers wave their handkerchiefs and cheer. Their orchestra plays the *International* and we stand bareheaded on the deck singing it with them. Then all the passengers sing the German national anthem."

The *Krassin* steamed to sea, the *Monte Cervantes* weighing her anchor and following soon afterwards. By four o'clock the two vessels had lost sight of each other in the fog.

Suddenly at seven o'clock something was wrong again. A radio from the *Monte Cervantes*: The engines are out of order and the liner is drifting.

The *Krassin* plowed back through the thick fog, sounding her whistle and vainly feeling around for the helpless liner. Not until nine did

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she find the German and then only to discover that the engines were in working order again. Thereafter the two ships proceeded southward in company, the *Monte Cervantes* a mile to starboard, the *Krassin* a little ahead with Brenkopf on the bridge.

On Saturday, August 4, the *Krassin* passed Bear Island. The *Monte Cervantes*, now joined by a tug sent out to rescue her, finally drew ahead of the ice-breaker and disappeared over the horizon.

On the fifth the sea was rough and the *Krassin* pitched abominably. Most of the youngsters aboard were as seasick as the English crossing the Channel. But by ten in the evening the coast of Norway was sighted and a pilot came aboard. And that night the crew of the *Krassin* for the first time in weeks watched the sun set and saw the moon.

The sixth the *Krassin* passed Hammerfest and steamed all day past a long mountainous coast. By mid-afternoon she sighted the headlands of Tromsø where the cruiser *Strasbourg* of the

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French Navy represented in serene safety the naval offices of the Rue Royale.

Tuesday the seventh the *Krassin* still pitched and rolled in the outer fjords. Over the coast towered a range of mountains, their peaks snow-capped, while below them on the green slopes were the little houses of the fishermen, each with its tiny field of cabbages and potatoes, unmistakably detected by this crew of seamen peasants. Here and there along the coast there fell three hundred foot waterfalls, cascading into the sea to the wonder of passing seamen.

XVII

BACK TO THE WORLD

THE eighth was passed on the open water with a heavy smooth sea running, the ninth close to shore under the giant rocky cliffs, the glory and unknown treasure of Norway. Oras conferred with the officers on the possibility of a second expedition. A storm blew up the next day, but by evening they were in the fjords and the sea and air were again calm, "a summer night in the Ukraine." On shore the lamps of cottages burned through the darkness and the roar of brooks on the mountainsides echoed over the smooth water.

Several miles from Stavanger, on the eleventh, they were met suddenly by a fleet of small boats of all kinds. One of the boats, a little excursion steamer, carried an orchestra. She had been hired by the Central Trades Union Committee.

A little later another boat brought aboard

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Alexandra Kollontai, Minister of the U. S. S. R. at Oslo, Mayor Middelthon of Stavanger and Dr. Smedsrud, president of the municipal council.

"We were received," says Lehman describing the scene, "as heroes who had conquered the hostility of the elements and had snatched men back to life from the arms of death. They sang and played the *International*, but what moved me much more, in fact it moved me to tears, was their singing of our old Lettish revolutionary hymn which I had sung in the ranks of the social democratic revolution in 1905, *Kas pasi staiga driskas un zihda*.

"I can't understand what has happened to make the bourgeoisie take us almost as if we were legendary heroes."

Once at anchor, the ship's company set to work to be presentable. Not one of them felt any false pride about their exploit, in fact all of them were perplexed at receiving such overwhelming compliments for acts which they did not conceive to be very remarkable. They were a bit proud, to be

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sure, not of themselves personally, but simply proud to belong to the invisible personality of the Soviet Republic. They were swamped with invitations and felt it incumbent upon them to appear in the manner of civilized people. Their dignity had to be preserved; oily clothing and dirty faces would not do.

They lined up before the purser's office to draw against their salaries. Each received 150 crowns (about \$50) and then all went ashore to buy some decent clothes.

The *Krassin's* deck was filthy, coated with a black, greasy substance like asphalt, the residue of weeks of belching funnels and work of all kinds in the arctic gales. Now it was worked hard under the treading of the crew and should be cleaned off. But there was no time; everybody had to go ashore or else receive the delegations on board with their red flags and their congratulations. Besides, nobody wanted to bother with the ship now; they had other things to think about; here at last was a city right across the channel.

Up forward a mechanic wedged a little mir-

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ror where he could, and shaved devotedly. In ten minutes he reappeared transformed, a handsome young man.

On a little launch loaned to the *Krassin* by the city, the men hurried ashore in troops and began searching through the stores. For a week I watched them come back aboard, loaded down with packages from the tailor, the haberdasher, the candy store. They paraded into the saloon to get a look at themselves in the tall mirror.

"Tell me, comrade, how does it look? Does it fit well at the back. What sort of cloth is it, good quality?"

They were grave as children. It seemed a serious business. Although a Parisian, I knew nothing about clothes; however, I had to carry it off.

"Fit? Splendidly. It's great."

That would delight them. They would turn the coat and offer the lining for inspection. "How about that?"

"That? Oh, that's nice stuff."

But why tell all this? Because it's human, be-

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cause heroism without human comedy is something apart; it seems unconnected with our life.

The officers bought naval caps with red embroidered crowns and anchors in gold.

“But look, you’ve got the crown of Norway there.”

“Yes, that’s true, but these are the only kind they have here.”

XVIII

THE END

A LAST despatch from the Tass agency closes this story. "Moscow, October 5. This afternoon the *Krassin* returned to Leningrad escorted by seaplanes and warships. She was met by representatives of the government and by delegates from the labor organizations and syndicates. The consular corps attended the welcome."

On the seventh, thirty members of the company went to Moscow. Another monster demonstration occurred. More than 25,000 persons crowded about the railway station as the train from Leningrad drew in. The Italian and Czech consuls were there, and members of the Norwegian mission.

The story of the wreck of the *Italia* is over. It was a noble story for some, shameful for others. On October 10 the French cruiser *Strasbourg*

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returned to Brest. She was damaged, but she had accomplished nothing.

Amundsen is dead. Guilbaud is dead, fallen into the sea in a plane not built for the rigors required of it.

On September 21 the committee of the Avia-khim recalled the *Krassin*. Her second expedition had saved no one, but she had done all that could be done, and even some things men thought could not be done. The ship's company had thrown themselves whole-heartedly into the search for those lost men who had been in the forward gondola of the *Italia*.

She had sailed from Stavanger August 21 and by the time she was recalled had forced her way towards Franz Josef Land as far as Alexander Land beyond the eighty-third parallel. In all that vast stretch, where the polar night had shut down, she found no trace of human life.

When I left the *Krassin* at Bergen on August 25, on the deck was a pile of planks and equipment built by the carpenter at Stavanger. Samoilovitch told me that if he could not find the

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Italians, he would build a cabin with this material on some conspicuous point and fill it with provisions for several men for a year.

Did he carry out his plan? Is there on some lonely headland in the vast desert of ice, a shelter under a lofty mast, toward which, through the horror of an arctic winter, press the survivors of the *Italia*?

PARIS, October, 1928.

ROALD AMUNDSEN

ON December 14, 1928 the bells of every church in Norway tolled from sunrise to sunset. Vast crowds stood bareheaded in the streets of Oslo and in every town in the Kingdom, silent for two minutes in memory of their great explorer. Every flag flew at half staff. Seventeen years before Roald Amundsen had discovered the south pole.

Because his expedition resulted in the death of Amundsen may be the chief reason in a few years that Nobile's flight is remembered at all. The records of haste and incompetence thrust into a scientific venture by the desire for good publicity, will be tucked away in the archives, where only aviators and explorers will dig them out. Malmgren's death will be remembered,

though not from choice. Even the *Krassin* herself cannot expect too large a measure of immortality, as her own crew seem to have felt on their return to Stavanger. But Amundsen's name is secure.

Amundsen was not without enemies, among them men who accused him of too great a sense of dramatic values. If that were true, if he staged his work with an eye to how it would look, it never led him to sacrifice any scientific accomplishment, nor to throw away the lives of any of his men.

And if from such a sense of drama, he had himself planned his last flight in the *Latham*, a flight to rescue a man with whom he had quarreled bitterly, he could have planned it no better than it occurred. A true heir of Bering and Hudson, he sailed away into the misty seas of the North.

LAWRENCE BROWN.



